

HISTOR
OF
SURINAM.



278 of 15

AN
Historical and Political View
OF THE
PRESENT and ANCIENT STATE
OF THE
COLONY of SURINAM
in SOUTH AMERICA;

WITH
The Settlements of DEMERARY and ISSEQUIBO;
together with an Account of its Produce
for 25 Years past.

By a PERSON who lived there Ten Years.

Philip Termon

L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS tract is from the French of Philip Fermin, M. D. of Maestricht, published in 1778; and though it is not a direct literal translation of the whole, it contains as much of Fermin's work as is necessary to give the reader a sufficient view of the history, situation, climate, inhabitants, productions, commerce, &c. &c. to make him well acquainted with the place; the remainder of the French Treatise being taken up with the Author's reasonings on the principles requisite to form a good government, his remarks on public and private credit, the nature of exchange, and his observations on the utility of colonies in general, which bear little or no relation to the colony of Surinam.

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H I S T O R Y O F S U R I N A M.

INTRODUCTION.

THE colony of Surinam, situated in part of Dutch Guiana in South America, lies between five and seven degrees of North latitude, extending one hundred miles along the coast, and is beyond contradiction the richest and most valuable colony belonging to the United Provinces, owing to the vast treasures it continually pours into their scale of commerce.

The great quantities of provisions and other commodities which the Dutch draw from it annually, is a very advantageous branch of commerce, as well in imports as exports.

Upon the most accurate calculation, it has been proved, that every inhabitant of a colony furnishes means of subsistence to four or five inhabitants of the mother
B country ;

country; hence it follows, that each colonist is as useful to the state to whom he belongs, as five of its other members. Admitting then this progression, the 5,000 inhabitants of which the colony of Surinam consists, become the support of 25,000 inhabitants of the mother country.

After such advantages, how incumbent is it on the parent state to support and protect its colonies?

The colony of Surinam, very different from others, is pregnant with every thing advantageous to the commerce of a state; and though for some years past, owing to the inattention of the Dutch, it has rather been declining, it is in a very recoverable situation; and if properly attended to, was it in our hands, would in a few years employ more ships, and produce a greater revenue to the Crown, than all the British West India Islands united.

These considerations have induced the Editor of these sheets to lay before the Publick so much of Dr. Fermin's account of this valuable colony, as is necessary to an English reader. This Dr. Fermin re-
fided

sided near ten years at Surinam, and speaks throughout his treatise from his own knowledge. He has also pointed out, according to his own ideas, some of the causes of its late decline, and hinted such remedies as he thinks will recover it.

C H A P. I.

Of the Conquest of the Colony of Surinam.

ALTHOUGH the French claim the honour of having, in the year 1640, laid the first foundations of this colony, by erecting a fort on the Western bank of the river of Surinam; it is certain, that besides the settlement then made by the Spaniards or Portuguese, who were afterwards driven off by the Indians, we find that the English, about 60 in number, under the directions of a Captain Marshall, in the year 1634, possessed some houses fenced round with pallisadoes, and were employed in the cultivation of tobacco, so as to form a small colony; but of which we have learned nothing since.

It was not till six years afterwards, that the French undertook to settle in this country; but finding it unhealthy, on account of the woods and marshes, they presently abandoned it, and with so much the less regret, as grubbing up the land cost them much pains, and they were continually exposed to the insults of the native Indians.

The English profited by their departure, and made themselves masters of the continent. In 1650, Lord Francis Willoughby sent to Guiana a vessel which anchored in the river Surinam, and was well received by the Indians. An alliance was made with them, and a settlement agreed upon. Three ships, one of 20 guns, were immediately freighted, and carried out a new colony of people, whom Lord Willoughby himself followed two years after.

This infant colony began to take its first form about the beginning of the year 1654: The French, driven out of Cayenne by the Indians, came, under the conduct of Monsieurs Braglione and Du Pleffis,

Pleffis, and took refuge among the English at Surinam, who gave them a favourable reception. These, who in number were about 350, and whose habitations extended along the banks of the river, were principally employed in the culture of tobacco, and cutting of wood for the carpenter and joiner.

Upon his return to England, Lord Willoughby, having obtained from Charles II. in conjunction with Laurence Hyde, second son of the Lord Chancellor Hyde Earl of Clarendon, the full and entire property of the colony of Surinam, and that by virtue of letters patent, dated June 2, 1662, continued to support it as before, till about the year 1665; at which time there were about 4,000 inhabitants, and 40 or 50 sugar plantations, situated along the river to the distance of about 30 miles from its mouth. The regency then was composed of a governor, his council, and the commonalty of the colony, submitting to the general laws of England, with some particular regulations of their own.

These settlements, still feeble and new, did not continue a long time in the possession of the English. They had for neighbours and competitors, the Dutch, who were for a length of time established upon the rivers Poumaron, Issequibo, and Berbice. The war which broke out between England and Holland in 1666, furnished the English with an opportunity of seizing first the posts of Poumaron and Issequibo; but they could not make themselves masters of that of Berbice. It was a Major John Scot who commanded the English fleet, sent upon this expedition by the governor of Barbadoes. The French, who were also at war with the English at that time, pillaged the colony of Issequibo, whose port however held out till the arrival of Matthew Bergenaer, governor of Berbice, at the head of a detachment of his garrison and some negroes of the western country, who, having driven out the English, took possession of this colony at the beginning of the following year.

On

On the other hand, the people of Zeland equipped three ships of war and some smaller vessels, put 300 chosen soldiers on board, and sent them to attack the English settlements on the coast of Guiana. This squadron sailed in the month of December, 1666, under the command of Captain Abraham Crynssen; and the troops were under the command of Captains P. J. Lichtenberg and Maurice de Rame.

On the 26th of February, 1667, the ships that took the English flag entered the river Surinam, and proceeded till they were under the cannon of the fortress; but G. Biam, who commanded in the absence of the governor, perceiving they were ignorant of the signals of their nation, fired upon them. Crynssen, after having hoisted the Dutch flag, returned it with a general broadside of his squadron, and landing his troops immediately, easily made himself master of the fortress, which was obliged to capitulate, being in a defenceless state, and 600 men from different plantations, whom the governor

expected, not assembling in sufficient time for his relief.

The terms granted to the inhabitants were, the enjoyment of their property, on their taking the oaths of allegiance to the States of Zeland. But all the effects of the governor Willoughby, and other absent English, were confiscated. The garrison surrendered prisoners of war, and the inhabitants were immediately put under a contribution of one thousand quintals of sugar. They were obliged to leave their arms in the fortress, where the flag of the Prince of Orange was hoisted in the afternoon, as a signal of conquest.

Captain de Rame was left governor of Paramaribo, with a garrison of 120 men, and 15 pieces of cannon, and they gave the citadel the name of Zelandia. They hastened to put it into a state of defence, to repair the breaches, and construct new works, and furnished it with provisions and ammunition for six months. This done, they put their spoils on board a vessel, to the value of more than 34,000 *l.* sterling, and conveyed it to Zeland.

After

After this fortunate expedition, in which they lost only one man, Crynssen departed with his fleet, and sailed to the rivers Poumaron and Iffequibo, where the English who had seized them the year before were dislodged in their turn by the governor of Berbice, who surrendered these two ports to Crynssen, on being paid the expences he had been at on the occasion. Crynssen left Ensign Baerlandt in the first, and a Mr. Sael in the second, with sufficient garrisons.

Thus having settled every thing, and given all necessary orders, Crynssen sailed for the island of Tobago, which the French had deserted, after having driven out the English, burnt their fort, destroyed their habitations, and ravaged their lands. The Indians frightened, and out of condition to defend their country against these strangers, had retired into the woods, without daring to appear. Being assured however of the friendship of the last comers, through an Indian whom they met with on the shore; they entered
into

into a kind of commercial alliance with them.

The Zelanders having taken possession of this island, employed the prisoners they brought from Surinam to repair the fort ; where they placed a guard of 25 men, under a Serjeant, with four or five pieces of cannon, to keep the islanders in awe, who were in fact reduced to a very small number ; and after visiting other parts of the island, which presented an equal picture of desolation, this little victorious fleet returned to the Isles, where joined by that of M. de la Barre, the French governor of Cayenne, it engaged the English near the island of Nevis, seized or destroyed most of their ships in New England, and returned to Zeland laden with its spoils.

During these conquests, peace was signed at Breda the last day of July in this year ; but before the news could arrive in America, the English were desirous again to try their fortune, and to be revenged of the French and Dutch. Great
was

was the alarm when it was heard that a formidable fleet had sailed under the command of Sir John Hermans; for the Dutch feared his design was to take the new colony, and that the ships sent from Zeland, laden with provisions and ammunition, would fall into his hands.

Hermans's squadron, consisting of seven ships of war and three frigates, with 1,200 men, sailed from Jamaica, first to Cayenne, of which they soon became masters, and as it was then pretended through the treachery of a Dutchman, who was perfectly well acquainted with those latitudes. However, let the case be as it might, the French were surprized, and had barely time to retire to Surinam, to the number of about 200, under the command of the Chevalier de Lezy, governor of the island, and where the English found only women and children.

Hermans, not judging it to be the interest of his country to keep possession of this colony, which he should soon be obliged to desert, staid only fifteen days, during which time he pillaged the place,
put

put aboard his vessels the artillery, arms, ammunition, and provisions, destroyed the plantations, and on his leaving it, set fire to all the buildings.

In the month of October, Hermans proceeded to the river Surinam, and made his way up as high as the fortress. Their landing was disputed, but ineffectually. The Chevalier Lezy, governor of Cayenne, on his arrival there, had given the governor of Surinam notice that in all likelihood he would be attacked, and generously offered his assistance, which was thankfully accepted. The English, having cleared the passage in spite of every opposition to the contrary, attacked the fortress, which made a resolute resistance from morning till four in the afternoon; the besiegers however carried their point by numbers, after having lost a great many men. 8

The Chevalier de Lezy and his people distinguished themselves extremely upon this occasion; and had it not been for the treachery of the major of the fortress, who opened a door to the besiegers, the English

English would have been forced to a disgraceful retreat. The governor, incensed at the cowardice of part of his troops, put himself at the head of the French, and those soldiers who were faithful to him, in order to repulse the enemy; they were however reduced to capitulate with the conquerors, and surrender themselves prisoners of war. Hermans extolled his bravery and that of the French, and declared, that had Cayenne been as well defended, it would not have changed its master.

Such is the French account taken from Le P. Labat, or the Voyages of the Chevalier des Marchais; but the Dutch account, without mentioning the treachery of the fort-major, relates simply, that having stood on the 17th a violent fire from the enemy's artillery, which had dismounted nine pieces of cannon, broken the fences, destroyed the intrenchments, and formed a breach, through which ten men in front might enter, the garrison, which had already lost 24 men, killed or wounded, was obliged to capitulate; but
5 whilst

whilst a council of war was holding for that purpose, the English got over the wall, and made themselves masters of the fortrefs, which they immediately proceeded to pillage.

Near 500 inhabitants, the greatest part English or Jews, whose sugar plantations extended four miles up the river, saw their mills, to the number of 30, pulled down or blown up. After a stay of about three weeks, Hermans returned triumphant to Barbadoes, where he landed his prisoners, with the governor de Rame, and ensign Colve, whom General Willoughby, governor of that island, transported soon after to Martinico, having in the interim received certain intelligence of the peace being signed.

Three days afterwards governor Willoughby sent his son Henry, with a ship of war and three merchant vessels, to Surinam, to persuade the English there settled to quit that colony, and go to Antigua and Montserrat with their property; declaring those to be rebels who refused to obey him, since he knew that the colony, by
virtue

virtue of the peace, was restored to the Dutch, which was in fact the case; and in June, 1669, by order of the court of London, all the English, as well whites as Negroes, to the number of 1,200, were transported to the island of Jamaica.

After a second long war between the English and the Dutch, the property of Surinam was again confirmed to the States General, by the treaty of Westminster, signed Feb. 9, 1674.

In the year 1679, Heinsius, governor of Surinam, and the principal persons interested in that colony, sent a petition to the States, imploring assistance against the Indians, who, jealous to see their country governed by Europeans, whom they considered only as usurpers, had killed and massacred all the whites that had the misfortune to fall into their hands. In consequence of this application, 150 men were sent in January, 1680; a number thought sufficient to stop the ravages of the Indians.

During these things, the province of Zeland, tired of the trouble and expence
of

of supporting and protecting this colony, ceded it, in July, 1682, to the Dutch East India company, for the sum of 21,666 *l.* sterling, which was ratified by the States General in the January following. The company however having taken possession, resolved some months after, dreading likewise that the expences of supporting this colony would exceed the advantages they should draw from it, sold one third part of it to the city of Amsterdam, and another third to a M. Corneille d'Aerfens, Lord of Sommelsdyk, who, with the East India Company, thus formed the society of Surinam.

These three co-proprietors became equal sharers in the administration of the colony, the sovereignty of which was nevertheless reserved to the States General. But M. de Sommelsdyk stipulated on his part to go to Surinam as governor, without any expence to the society, but that of a certain quantity of wines and grocery to be annually sent him; with this express condition however, that if his conduct was disapproved of by the colonists,

colonists, he should be liable to be recalled; but if he gave satisfaction, his next heir after his death, provided he was judged capable, should have the government in preference to any other, if not, the person next in succession. This agreement, with certain other stipulated articles, was executed by the parties May 21, 1683.

CHAP. II.

The History of the Government of M. de Sommelsdyk, and his tragical End.

IN conformity to one of the articles of the conditions entered into by the three co-proprietors of the colony of Surinam, M. de Sommelsdyk went as governor to this continent. They allowed him, in consequence of his going, 300 soldiers, under the command of three captains, with an appointment of 800 * florins each annually; four lieutenants, at 400 florins each, two ensigns at 315 florins,

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* One florin is equal to 20*d*. English.

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rins, and twelve serjeants at 3 florins, 3 stivers † a week, leaving the choice of the officers to him.

The new governor set off the 3d of September, 1683, for Surinam, where he arrived the 24th of November following.

In the beginning of the year, he established, to the satisfaction of the inhabitants, a council of regency, and one of justice. He enacted many useful laws to render the colony flourishing. Among others, he forbade the marriage of the white inhabitants with the black slaves, and any great familiarity with them; he repressed also the cruelty of many towards their slaves, in ordaining for the future that no one should have the right of maiming or punishing with death, but that such as deserved such punishment should be delivered over to justice. He kept this up with the most rigid equity, and passed his judgments without any respect to persons; insomuch that he once ordered a chief of the Indians to be beheaded for murdering one of his three wives.

We

† One stiver is equal to 1d. English.

We must do him the justice to say, that he governed the colony for some years to the satisfaction of the inhabitants. His character was that of noble and generous ; he was particularly attached to religion, and much esteemed by the pious ; he was popular and liberal to every one, but he detested licentiousness, and repressed libertinism. He was hated however by the soldiers, accustomed to debauchery and idleness, because he made them work on the fortifications.

Various accusations were sent to the States General against him, doubtless at the instigation of people who could not suffer things, which had fallen into great disorder under a Zeland government, should be put upon a better footing by M. de Sommelsdyk, whom they reported as rough and severe. In short, the depravity of the planters was such, that they knew not even the names of right or justice.

Among other things laid to his charge, they accused him of being too slow to create tribunals of justice and police ; but

this was owing to a want of proper people to superintend; for on his arrival, the town of Paramaribo consisted only of 30 houses, the greatest part of which were taverns or publick houses, the few reserved being the residence of the commandant Verboom, the receiver, and two or three others occupied by the officers of the garrison and their wives; for as to the plantations, they were under the administration of directors, the major part of whom were English.

They charged the Governor also with taxing the inhabitants improperly and unjustly.

During the war which the Governor maintained against the native Indians, he was ever careful to defend the colony against the incursions and ravages of these people by intrenchments proper to cut off the passage; and the different expeditions which he sent out from time to time were always attended with the happiest success.

The destruction of many of their habitations led three of these nations, known by the names of Caraïbes, Waroes, and Arowalls,

Arowalls, to conclude a peace, on condition that they should enjoy a perfect liberty, and not be any more reduced to slavery. This peace, which was followed by that of another neighbouring nation of Indians, gave place to many other arrangements relative to the well-being of the colony.

The Governor established several departments, as well for the administration of the government, as for the particular interest of the inhabitants. Whilst he was employed in these salutary measures, he unfortunately raised, in 1688, a sedition among the soldiers that cost him his life.

The principal cause of this revolt was a delay of the ships which were expected from Holland with provisions for the garrison. In consequence of this, the Governor was obliged to reduce the common allowance of the soldiers, who on this account refused to work on the fortifications. The Commandant Verboom, who was beloved by the troops, did his best to appease them with good words, but it did not continue long.

Two days after, on the 19th of July, when the Governor and Commandant were walking in an orange grove, eleven of these feditious fellows, half drunk, came up to the Governor armed with loaded musquets, and demanded, with great arrogance, a larger allowance of provisions; and on his drawing his sabre to intimidate the mutineers, they fired at him all together, and laid him dead on the spot. The Commandant received also a wound, of which he died the ninth day.

After this assassination, the rebels made themselves masters of the fortress Zelandia, put the officers under an arrest, seized the magazine, furnished themselves with ammunition and provisions, and increased to the number of 150 men; when having elected for Colonel a German trumpeter, they added a Captain, a Lieutenant, an Ensign, an Adjutant, and four lower officers. In short, they took an oath of fidelity to their Chief, and promised to defend him to the last drop of their blood.

About

About five in the evening, the body of the unfortunate Governor was interred in the fortress with a great deal of pomp.

The news of this tragical event being brought to the members of the Council dispersed upon the rivers Cottica and Com-mewyn, each one in his division gave necessary orders to the officers of the militia to assemble, at the plantation Wiam-pibo, about a mile above the fortress, all the inhabitants of the plantations, as well as the several detachments of soldiers who occupied the neighbouring posts. The Counsellors being there arrived on the 23d, resolved to write a letter to the Commandant Verboom, (to whom they testified at the same time their extreme grief on the death of the Governor, and the wound he himself had received), informing him of the measures they had taken, in conjunction with the inhabitants, to put an immediate stop to this dreadful revolt; but preferring the modes of mildness and moderation, wished to know if the mutineers would persist in their rebellion, or whether they would surrender to

the discretion of the Council, who were ready to listen to them, sending them for this purpose a safe conduct for their deputies.

In consequence of this, three deputies were dispatched, commissioned to demand consent to a certain agreement which the rebels wanted the Commandant, the officers, and inhabitants of Paramaribo, to enter into; namely, to engage to pay them 3,500 florins on their leaving the colony, on board the Salamander sloop, which they had seized for that purpose. The deputies of these rebels proposed to the Counsellors that they should send commissioners to the fortress to regulate these terms, or give them a letter to the same effect: but they answered politely, saying, there was no occasion for this, as the garrison had already agreed with the Commandant and the other officers. Indeed, the Council were very well pleased with the determination of the rebels to leave the country; and their deputies, who had met with a good reception, returned contented with this answer, though it was not a positive promise

promise on the part of the Council, who however continued to take every necessary step to convince the principal rebels of their acquiescence.

The Commandant Verboom was obliged to grant them a general pardon, with the full liberty of leaving the colony or continuing there as they pleased : but the Council did not think themselves bound to give their entire approbation ; and finding themselves masters of the river, where there were collected many vessels sufficiently equipped and armed to assist the inhabitants against the rebels, they only waited till they had embarked on board the Salamander sloop, to notify their ultimate determinations, which were to except out of the general pardon those who had fired upon the Governor and Commandant, and whom they meant to demand, in order to punish them according to their deserts.

The rebels were thunderstruck at this news ; but finding themselves surrounded by the vessels on board of which the Council and the militia had embarked, they
determined

determined to give up the guilty, to the number of eleven, who were conducted to the fortress the 3d of August following, and there executed; three having been condemned to be broken on the wheel, and the rest to the gibbet. The remainder left the continent.

C H A P. III.

Further Events of the Colony.

AS soon as the society in Holland was informed of the tragical end of M. de Sommelsdyk, they offered the government to his son M. de Châtillon, who took the name and seignory of Sommelsdyk, but who was too sensible of the catastrophe of his father to accept the government. On his refusal, it was offered to M. John de Scherpenhuizen, who sailed for Surinam in 1689, with a reinforcement of troops and a fresh supply of ammunition and provisions. M. de Châtillon however embarked in the same transport, to take possession of what his father left.

On

On his arrival at Surinam, the new Governor found the greatest confusion. The fortifications were in the worst condition. Disorder reigned among the troops, and violent debates alienated the respective members from each other, as well in the political government as in the ecclesiastic; so that there was such a general overthrow in civil affairs as required an immediate and efficacious remedy.

To increase the embarrassment, the States General were then at war with France; so that the Governor's first care was to put the colony in a state of defence; but scarcely had he begun his work, when, on the 6th of May, a fleet of nine ships of war and a bomb-ship appeared before it.

The enemy, with a view of surprizing the colony, seized first a vessel which lay as a guardship at the mouth of the river; but another guard, nearer and more concealed, having given timely notice, a council of war was held, and salutary arrangements made for a vigorous defence.

For

For this purpose, several merchant vessels, which lay in the road, were ranged with some barks on the side of the fortress Zelandia to cover the town of Paramaribo, whilst other merchant vessels were posted at the mouth of the river Commewyne to impede an entrance. At the same time, the necessary preparatives were made to defend the fortress. The inhabitants took arms, and every step was taken to meet the enemy firmly.

In short, the French fleet, followed by the guardship which they had taken, and several flat boats, anchored, but out of the reach of the cannon of the fortress. Presently a letter was sent by an Indian from M. du Cassé, admiral of the fleet, to M. de Châtillon, addressing him as Lord of Surinam, and expressing how happy he was to meet so gallant a man in that colony, &c. But this gentleman, though still young, had too much good sense to be seduced by these fine compliments; and conceiving this flattering letter to be no other than a trick of the enemy to bring him over to their interest, sent no kind of answer.

Du

Du Casse, frustrated in his attempt, next determined to send a sloop with a white flag to the fortress, apparently with a design to make observations, and summon it to surrender.

The Governor, on his part, judging it proper to conceal from the enemy their bad situation, gave the sloop a full discharge of the artillery, which obliged it to retire in the greatest disorder.

Sunday, the 8th of May, the fleet advanced nearer the fortress, and began to bombard it, but without doing the least damage that day. The next day the Governor doubled his posts, and placed an advanced guard on the river in ship boats to watch the motions of the enemy. But Du Casse, who dared not to expose himself by advancing his fleet during the day light, profited however by the obscurity of the night and the tide, and thus ranged himself in order of battle under the cannon of the fortress, without being perceived. And suddenly they announced their arrival by the fire of their guns,

guns, and by the redoubled cries of, *Long live the King of France.*

The Dutch did not delay to answer them by a continued fire from their artillery. The action was smart, and kept up for more than two hours. In short, the enemy, seeing but little prospect of success, cut their cables and fell down the river with the beginning of the tide.

The Dutch had not upon this occasion more than seven or eight men wounded; but the loss of the French must have been more considerable, for a number of dead bodies and many pieces of wrecks were seen floating upon the river.

Tuesday morning, the 10th, the French fleet was seen without flags and in great disorder close to the river banks, within reach of the cannon of the fortress. They even sent some soldiers in boats in sight of the enemy to take up the anchors they had left; and the troops, who were exceedingly fatigued, were there permitted to take repose.

As they had not yet given the signal to the vessels that guarded the mouth of the
river

river Commewyne, to inform them that all was well, it was in this interval that M. de Châtillon, who during the action commanded the artillery, and who with his valet de chambre had loaded the cannon to give the second signal, was dangerously wounded in the face and hands, by the piece going off too soon, to the great regret of all the inhabitants of the colony he had so bravely defended ; but he happily recovered in a short time.

The same day the French bomb vessel advanced afresh, and threw bombs till midnight, but without the least effect. Wednesday the enemy were busied in repairing their ships, and making such dispositions as seemed to announce their early departure. The Dutch however were not less upon their guard, and were constantly sending out small vessels to watch the motions of the enemy.

The 12th in the morning, news was received that the French had dropped down to the mouth of the river Commewyne, with a design of making their way up into it. Upon this, orders were

given for five merchant ships to lie by well equipped with men and ammunition; and two fire-ships. On board one of these ships, the governor embarked himself, in order to attack the enemy, who, seeing another fleet of Dutch merchantmen in the river Surinam, and fearing they should fall within two fires, determined in the night on a precipitate retreat, so that in the morning they were entirely out of sight. This happy deliverance spread joy in every face; and the inhabitants returned to their plantations, after having promised to contribute all in their power, when necessary, to the safety and defence of the colony.

About seven years after, they were threatened with a new attack, on the part of M. de Gennes, admiral of a numerous French fleet, who were, in 1696, at the island of Cayenne, the governor of which, M. de Ferole, would have accompanied him in this expedition, with part of his garrison; but being apprized by some Indians lately arrived from Surinam, that two large Dutch men of war of 70 guns each were ready to sail, the French did
not

not judge it expedient to put their enterprize at that time into execution.

War being again broken out with France, who knew now more than ever the importance of the colony of Surinam, become very flourishing in a few years; their admiral James Caffard was permitted to pay it a visit. His first attempt was in the month of June, 1712, and without success; but four months after, returning with a fleet of eight ships of war, seven sloops, and thirty flat bottom boats manned with 3,000 men, he determined to put the colony under contribution.

M. John de Goyer, who was governor at that time, being informed of his arrival at the mouth of the river, fired a signal of alarm summoning all the inhabitants, as well those of the plantations as troops, to take up arms and oppose their entrance; but the colonists were too late in their operations, and the French began to make a descent with 350 men, on the 10th of October, in seven flat bottomed boats, who landed in a plantation opposite the fortress.

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The next morning the French General wrote to the governor, making propositions of capitulation; adding, that in case of refusal he hoped to make himself master of the colony.

The people, not willing to submit to these conditions, determined to oppose the enemy; but whilst they were making the necessary preparations, the French spread themselves in the principal works, and seized some of the neighbouring plantations belonging to the town of Paramaribo.

The inhabitants, on their part, under the orders of their chief, as well as the garrison, although determined to defend their lives and property, seeing themselves too inferior in point of force to the enemy, to make any long resistance, particularly as both the fortifications and troops were in bad condition, were obliged to capitulate, in order to avoid a greater misfortune. The articles were signed on the 27th of October, after a siege of 17 days, and were no other than to engage to pay within 15 days a contribution of 15,000 hogsheads of sugar, or its value

lue at one penny halfpenny per pound : this contribution to be annual, in case they came annually to demand it. All things being thus amicably settled, the French fleet left the river on the 6th of December, carrying with them, in provisions and bills of exchange, about 51,900 *l.* sterling, a sum equal in value to the stipulated quantity of sugar.

The day after the capitulation was signed, M. Caffard detached one of his large ships, with some of his smaller ones, under the command of Baron de Moans, towards the colony of Berbice, who ransomed themselves on the 8th of December, after a bombarding of four days ; in which time the French threw 150 shells, of which the greatest part fell without the fort.

Since this misfortune, the consequences of which were felt for a long time, the two colonies were not exposed to any similar attack ; they were however troubled with intestine dissensions, and dangerous revolts of the negroes, which shall be the subject of another chapter.

The government of Surinam had been obliged, from the month of January, 1713, to command every inhabitant to deliver in an inventory of his property, in order to establish a proportionable tax, which with some difficulty was at last fixed at eight or ten *per cent.* upon their capitals; this produced a large sum, but not sufficient to pay the expences of the equipment of the fleet; so that the undertakers found themselves by this means ruined to all intents and purposes.

They complained besides at Surinam of the mal-administration of the directors of the society in Holland, accused them with neglecting the defence of the colony, saying they ought to be responsible for the loss the inhabitants had thereby sustained. These murmurs were made, when Casfard made his first appearance upon the coast, in the month of June, 1712, at which time the principal planters, and persons interested, represented to the States General that their colony, become so flourishing through their care and labour, was not in a proper state of defence against
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the frequent attacks of their enemies ; that of course they were in want of a powerful assistance to protect both their property and their lives, and that the society had not fulfilled their engagements; that the Republic of Holland was too much interested in the fate of a colony which promised them so great advantages, to abandon it to the power of an enemy, when its safety and prosperity depended only on a better administration, &c. These complaints were renewed soon after their late attack; but the directors knew so well how to apologise and justify themselves, that the States General resolved that their complaints were ill-founded, and of course they had no reason to expect an indemnity from the society; ordering at the same time all the inhabitants to pay the enjoined taxes, and demean themselves properly to the directors, who with the council and the colonists had concerted means to provide for the safety of the country.

It must however be allowed, that had the society, before that fatal epoch, taken

care to repair the fortifications, and keep up a sufficient garrison, well furnished with arms and ammunition, admiral Casfard, with all his naval force, would never have been able to strike so severe a blow; but it appears, that a consideration of the encrease of expences, and the decrease of profits, was ever the principal motive of that negligence with which the society and its directors were so frequently reproached. Be it however as it might, in spite of the decision of the States General, as we have mentioned, a long time passed before any thing could be done on this account; and it was not till the end of the year 1733, that the directors of the society concluded with the plenipotentiaries of the colony, certain articles, which were approved and ratified by the States General, the 19th of December in the same year.

By virtue of this agreement it was settled, that the colony of Surinam was in the course of seven years to be put into a proper state of defence, by means of fortifications then proposed to be constructed;

structed; that the directors should send from Europe workmen and necessary materials, and the government of Surinam should provide a proper number of slaves to labour in these works; that, during these seven years, the directors should contribute annually the sum of 1,666*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* sterling, and the inhabitants and planters 5,000*l.* more, and that this money should be applied only to the expence of the fortifications; and that if, after they were completed, there should be any money left, one fourth part should be returned to the directors, and the other three to the planters; that in order to raise this annual sum of 5,000*l.* a tax should be levied on the products of the colony, and a poll tax on such as were not deemed planters; that the directors should keep in the colony, at their own expence, four companies of soldiers, 25 men in each company, with proper officers, arms, ammunition, &c. and if it should happen in the course of time, that any gold or silver mines should be discovered at Surinam, the directors should be obliged to remit a

third of their profits to the treasurer of the inhabitants, till such time as the people then living, or their heirs, should be reimbursed the money advanced by them towards the expence of the fortifications.

Some differences however, since raised between the contracting parties, relative to the execution of this agreement, gave room to new articles, which were signed at Paramaribo the 6th of March, 1748, and ratified by the States General the 16th of January, 1749. But in terminating these differences, it would have been well had some of another nature been adjusted, which subsisted in the colony, or of which, a long time since, the inhabitants have complained, namely, certain infractions and encroachments of successive governors.

From the year 1736, the members of the government at Surinam had conveyed their complaints to the States General, who undertook to examine into them by commissioners, in whose hands the matter rested without redress till the year 1747, when Solomon Du Pleffis, one of the council, arrived in Holland

with full powers from divers planters and other persons interested in the colony. The petition he presented to the States General the 31st of July, 1747, was to this effect. "That a non-redress of their
" grievances had encouraged the Governor Mauricius to aggravate them more
" and more, by exercising a sovereign and
" despotic authority within the colony;
" that, contrary to his oath and duty, he
" had broken and violated the most essential
" privileges of their charter, as if
" they had no other laws to follow but
" his immoderate ambition and his particular
" interests; in short, that till the
" year 1742, the first of his government,
" things had never been carried to that
" excess by any of his predecessors." This petition was signed by 41 planters of Surinam, and 24 persons interested in the province, and accompanied with proofs of the truth of their accusations against the Governor, and concluded with requesting his recal to render an account of his conduct to their High Mightinesses; but
without

without any prejudice either to his rank or appointments.

The States General having referred the whole to the deputies of the East India Company, resolved, upon their report, to communicate the same to the directors of the society of Surinam in Holland, with orders to return their answer to their High Mightinesses in the space of one month. At the month's end, the directors requested a longer time, alledging, " that
" it was not possible to examine, in that
" space, such a variety of matter with
" that attention that was requisite; especially when the honour and reputation
" of a man was concerned who till now
" was of the first renown, and who had
" even been employed before this with the
" highest commendations by their High
" Mightinesses themselves in other important posts." But the States General replied, " that it appeared strange to them,
" that after the expiration of the time
" they should solicit a still longer delay
" than could be granted; and recommended to them very seriously to send an
" answer

“ answer and their observations in the
“ space of 15 days, at least such as they
“ had to make upon the papers then be-
“ fore them, *viz.* those received from the
“ colony of Surinam.” The directors
having entered into the particulars of the
imputations laid to the charge of M. Mau-
ricius, found them made up of malice
and falsehood, from a great number of the
papers; and excepted against the full powers
and proofs of Du Pleffis, whom they ac-
cused in their turn of a thousand very
reprehensible evasions.

From this moment the States General
found themselves overwhelmed with pe-
titions on one side and replies on the other;
till at last they came to a resolution to send
all the papers delivered by Du Pleffis to
the Governor Mauricius, with orders to
transmit to them his justification, and in
the mean time that a stop should be put
to all proceedings begun on account of
these complaints.

In the interim, the directors of the so-
ciety wrote another letter, Feb. 2, 1748,
to the States General, and accompanied it
with

with new proofs received from Surinam to invalidate the powers given to Du Pleffis, shewing that they were not only improper, but even fraudulently extorted; that more than 20 persons who had signed them, were the dregs of the people, even so low as a server of warrants, some not knowing what they had signed, and others signing them through menaces, promises, and the like arts; all declaring that they were either seduced or surprized into the act, and that they had not the least grievance to charge to the Governor Mauricius. The governor's council at Surinam, in addressing these papers to the society, protested that they were no party to the powers given to Du Pleffis, and prayed, on the contrary, that the directors would do their utmost to oppose every step undertaken by virtue of any such supposed authority.

The States General, having referred to a commission as well this letter of the directors as a new petition of Du Pleffis, resolved a few days after, upon the report of their deputies, to send a copy of the last of these papers to Governor Mauricius,
recom-

recommending to him to attend to the charter granted by their High Mightinesses; and also gave notice to the directors of the society to send from the Hague, in eight or ten days, some delegates from their body to confer with those of their High Mightinesses upon the contents of these last petitions, either in the presence or absence of Du Pleffis, as the deputies of their High Mightinesses should think proper. This conference was not attended with any effect; the members having only resolved to restore Du Pleffis to his seat among the council at Surinam; but upon later reports, which were not so favourable to him, they presently revoked the resolution.

Things rested in this state of indetermination till the 3d of February, 1750, when the States General thought proper to transmit all the papers to the supreme council at Surinam, that after examination they might dispose things below agreeable to their own resolves.

However, by another resolution of the 22d of May of the same year, the States
General

General having requested and authorised the Stadtholder to pursue such immediate measures as he thought proper for the establishment of tranquillity, and for the security of the colony, then troubled by the incursions of the fugitive negroes, his Serene Highness was advised to send commissioners with a certain number of troops; and the expences of this expedition, rated at 12,500*l.* sterling, were to be defrayed, one fourth part by the society, and the remainder by the planters and persons interested; to be levied for the first two years by a poll tax, and by a duty paid by every English and Dutch vessel coming into, and going out of the port, into the treasury of the colony. In the mean time the States should advance to the directors 4,166*l.* sterling, to carry these engagements into execution.

A regiment was immediately formed, consisting of 600 men, drawn from all the garrisons of the State, and the command given to M. le Baron de Spörke, major general of infantry, with the title of High commissioner, to whom was joined in the
com-

commission, M. Boffchaert, pensionary of the town of Schiedam, and M. de Swart Steenis, counsellor of Gorcum, who were impowered to take cognizance of the situation of things in the colony, and to make such dispositions as they should judge necessary.

These commissioners arriving at Surinam, in December, 1750, published a declaration the 14th of April following to this effect, "that having taken every necessary information respecting the grievances arisen between the regency, and some of the proprietors of plantations, they had resolved to return to Holland to make a true report to his Serene Highness, that such redress might be given as his said Highness should think proper; that they thought it necessary to send the Governor M. J. Mauricius to Holland, (but without any impeachment of his honour, or loss of salary;) conferring on major general Spörke the full power and authority of the Governor during his absence."

"fence." All they did further was, to fill up the vacant seats in the council.

The other two commissioners returned with the Governor Mauricius in the month of August following, who thought proper to leave the colony without any ceremony, out of respect, as he said, to his enemies, though the commissioners found nothing against him. The judgment of the supreme council ended likewise to the credit of the Governor. Proceedings were immediately issued out against Du Plessis, and he was confined till a general amnesty took place the 20th of July, 1753, in which the States General, at his request, consented that he should be included; when he was set at liberty on condition that he should pay costs, and never return to the colony again. Nothing could be more pathetic than the speech M. Mauricius made to the assembly of the directors of the society; nor any thing more flattering, or more honourable, than the resolution, by which they accepted his resignation, besides paying him the arrears of his salary. In short,
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the States General conferred on him afterwards the office of their minister to Hamburgh, in which character he had resided there formerly, and where he died in an advanced old age. But to return to the affairs of the colony.

Scarce had these two commissioners on their return, made their report to the Prince Stadtholder, but the death of His Serene Highness, which happened October 22, 1751, retarded for some time the measures he was about to take in consequence. On the petition of the principal inhabitants and persons interested at Surinam, the Princess Governante, at the request of the States General, December 20th of the same year, took upon her to settle the whole affair; and her first proposition was, and indeed it was the advice of the late Prince, that the troops should continue there one year, agreeable to the sums stipulated for their support.

The final resolutions of their High Mightinesses, dated July 20th, 1753, contained a very particular account of the measures concerted between the commis-

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sioners

fioners of her Royal Highness, and the delegates of the society for the arrangement of affairs in the colony. The first point respected, " a satisfaction to be
" made to the governor Mauricius, to
" whom was to be paid, at one time, the
" sum of 1,250*l.* sterling. The next three
" articles related to the recal of the
" troops belonging to the state, and
" replacing them with an augmentation
" of 300 men to those kept by the so-
" ciety; namely, 125 at the society's ex-
" pence, and 175 at that of the planters
" and inhabitants, and this for the term
" of three years. By the fifth article,
" the old counsellors both of justice
" and regency were removed, and a fresh
" list formed, by the directors of the so-
" ciety and the principal planters and
" inhabitants, leaving the election of nine
" not in the list to the choice of her
" Royal Highness; and the governor for
" the time being (which was a M.
" Commelin, Baron Spörke being dead,)
" was ordered to tender them the custom-
" ary oath. The means of defence, ame-
" lioration

“ lioration and encrease of the colony,
“ formed the object of the sixth article,
“ the execution of which was left to
“ the governor and council, and esta-
“ blished a new capitation tax, to defray
“ the expences for thirteen years succe-
“ sively. The seventh article gave the
“ force of law to her Royal Highness’s
“ decision on 52 points of the planters
“ petition that had been adjusted by the
“ commissioners of his late Serene High-
“ ness at Surinam, May 23, 1751. Some
“ later orders were confirmed or renewed
“ by the remaining articles; and in short,
“ a general amnesty was granted to root
“ out the dissensions which reigned in the
“ colony.” The States General, in ap-
proving these dispositions, thanked her
Royal Highness for her zealous and inde-
fatigable care in the execution of this
commission.

After having thus laid before the reader
the principal circumstances of the late trou-
bles of Surinam, and of the means taken to
appease them, I shall in the following
chapter speak of those measures that were

purfued to effect its repofe, with refpect to the fugitive negroes ; but this will require fome prior account and explanation of the origin and nature of the continual wars, which the colony has been obliged to carry on to the prefent time, againft thefe people.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Wars of the Colony with the fugitive Negroes.

THE fpirit of difcord has ever reigned through the earth. There have been quarrels and combats ever fince there have been men. 'Tis in vain therefore to go back to the origin and caufes of their diffentions ; we can only attribute them to envy or covetoufnefs, which is the fource of every animofity.

It is not however quite the fame, with refpect to the people of America. In ancient times, the Englifh and the French made an attack upon the natives a common caufe. They brought them into fubjection by the force of arms ; but this
kind

kind of fortuitous society was often interrupted by events dreadful even to the conquerors themselves.

The colony of Surinam has felt the most calamitous effects from the negroe slaves, whom they have from time to time imported from Africa for the cultivation of their lands.

The bad treatment of them by the English, having led many to avoid it in future by flight; their numbers have so much encreased from year to year, that they have formed a kind of colony in the woods, which are almost inaccessible, along the rivers of Surinam, Saramaca, and Copename, and are become very formidable enemies to their former masters.

Under the command of chiefs, whom they have elected among themselves, they have cultivated lands for their subsistence, and make frequent incursions into the neighbouring plantations, where they pillage, destroy and seize, nay even massacre all that fall within their reach. These people, though stupid in appearance, and little exercised in the art of war, have

nevertheless contrived means to intrench and secure themselves so well in the woods, that it is difficult for the whites to approach them sufficiently to attack them, having a quantity of morasses to pass, which the negroes only can cross.

During the first years of their settlement, the English offered rewards to such as should bring these deserters to their masters; this custom has always continued, but the rewards are now encreased to 50 florins a head, and 1,000 for the discovery of any negroe town; but notwithstanding all these rewards, they cannot be got at to be destroyed, nor can their continual invasions to procure what they want, such as powder, lead, arms, and utensils proper to cultivate their lands, ever be repressed. Nay, they frequently bring with them all their slaves, and such as will not accompany them willingly, they oblige by force.

The colony thus become the theatre of a perpetual war, and the inhabitants seeing themselves persecuted more and more by their own fugitive slaves, are obliged
to

to declare war against them, and to send out from time to time detachments of troops to reduce them if possible by force of arms.

They have made many campaigns, which have cost the colonists immense sums, and without success. Undisciplined troops, wanting almost every thing, and commanded by officers without experience or any knowledge in the art of war, having to do with people much more acquainted with it than themselves; where is the wonder at their little success? What possibility is there of extirpating a rebellious and mutinous people without means? Considering the little choice that has ever been made in sending officers and soldiers to Surinam, it is almost impossible to form a body from them capable of defending a colony so much and so constantly exposed to the most imminent dangers. The bravery and activity of some, and the indolence of others, occasion incessantly dissensions which run the best concerted projects aground, especially when it is required to strike some decisive blow.

Many a time have they missed the opportunity of making themselves masters of this hostile people, through want of courage and firmness. And all this while the unfortunate inhabitants, obliged to contribute to the expences of these fruitless expeditions, become victims to the impositions that overwhelm them. The consequence of all these wars is, that so far from intimidating the enemy, it serves only on the contrary to embolden them the more.

Indeed such is the severity with which the inhabitants of Surinam treat their slaves, that they are in a great measure the cause of their own disasters. Many, steeled against every sentiment of humanity, which they consider as a weakness, are constantly exercising the rod of tyranny; of course, they are justly punished by the infidelity, desertion, or suicide of these wretched creatures, who too often fall victims to their want of mercy. A spirit of revenge furnishes these slaves with resources far more destructive still; instructed in their early years in preparing
subtle

subtle poisons, which grow as I may say under their hands, they employ them equally to destroy men as animals. They enjoy in this despair the double pleasure of delivering themselves and their fellow slaves from the yoke of servitude, and which to them, when they are so rigorously treated, is more dreadful than death, and of putting their tyrants in a situation that draws near to their state of misery, by leaving them to do their work themselves; nor does the fear of punishment ever stop them.

The tyranny and cruelty of some masters is so great, that some will castrate their slaves; others will beat them till they expire; and such bad treatment cannot fail to encrease the fugitive negroes who surround the colony on all sides.

Had these cruelties been suppressed by the prudence of government, Surinam would have been at this day a most flourishing state, and its inhabitants would not be in daily danger as they are, of losing their property and their lives.

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It is just to say, that without the vigorous and nervous arm of the negroes the lands in that part of the world could not have been cultivated, and which have produced such amazing wealth to a number of emigrants, who left their country in search of a fortune which they could not there acquire without great labour. Besides, though born in a climate different from ours, and though of a different complexion, these slaves are not less reasonable creatures than ourselves, and on that account not less worthy of the compassion of their masters, independant of the interest their masters have in their labour.

The number of fugitives, which now amounts to more than 20,000, are daily encreasing by the easiness they find of deserting into so vast an extent of country surrounded with marshes, and covered with almost inaccessible woods. It is impossible almost to describe the trouble of pursuing them, and the vast sums of money it has cost the colonists, to maintain for so many years a continual unsuccessful war against them. In short,
not

not being able to destroy them, nor secure themselves from their continual hostilities, they are forced to form alliances with this people more disgraceful to the government than advantageous to the colony.

The first proposition made by M. Mauricius, and which was unanimously consented to in council, was to send out in the month of September, 1749, a large detachment under the command of a Captain Creutz, who, after some advantages gained upon the negroes of Saramaca, brought them to accept a peace under the most solemn engagements that they would not molest the inhabitants any more, but give up every deserter that should fly to them for protection, on condition that a reward was paid them of 50 florins a head by the proprietor of the slaves so deserting.

These peaceable negroes, whose number is about 1,600, have no communication with others beyond them, whom the inhabitants have for a long time searched for, and whom they wish to bring into subjection, as well as those who are dispersed.

dispersed through a vast extent of country, between the rivers Saramaca and Marowine upon the back of the colony.

The Governor gave also some fresh proofs of his prudence and understanding upon this business; but his advice was violently opposed by many of the council and principal inhabitants, of which some shewed their discontent even on the subject of the peace concluded with the negroes of Saramaca, and represented it as a step very ruinous to the colony; so that mutual distrust soon occasioned a rupture, and the war having recommenced, continued for several years with the most dreadful consequences to the inhabitants.

Every other grievance which the enemies of M. Mauricius laid to his charge, was nothing in comparison to that which they alledged respecting this peace. The Governor however, besides demonstrating the absolute necessity of such a measure, justified himself by the concurrence of the council to this his proposition, and by the advantages that resulted from it even the first year; for the negroes were quieted for
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the present, though the peace proposed was merely to amuse them till such time as considerable reinforcements were sent from Europe, designed only to extirpate them.

In short, notwithstanding all the clamours against this public peace, they would have thought themselves happy to have been able to renew it, not only with the negroes of Saramaca, but to have concluded a similar one before with those of Tempati, who have eight habitations or townships between the Marowine and the creek of Jouka, and who are in number about 15 or 1600 men. Their number began to encrease in February, 1757, by the revolt of 150 slaves from six plantations at Tempati which they had ravaged, and who saved themselves in the woods, where others from time to time have joined them.

This revolt was occasioned by the misconduct of M. Martin, one of the council, who would have removed his old slaves from a plantation of wood to one of sugar situated on the river Tempati. Born on,

or accustomed to their old abode, these negroes rose on their arrival at the new plantation, the director of which was known to be a very severe master. And indeed he was the first victim of their rage, having had his hand cut off by a stroke of a sabre which he received in the beginning of the revolt, and which has been since attended with many dreadful consequences.

The negroes of the eight townships mentioned before, soon joined themselves to these, and in troops pillaged the neighbouring plantations, and took away all they could carry with them, leaving only to M. Martin and his director regret at their rash undertaking.

The Governor, informed of this event, hastened to march some detachments against them; but this campaign not being more fortunate than preceding ones, owing to the cowardice and misconduct of the commanding officers, they were again obliged to conclude a peace as well with the negroes of Tempati as those of Auka, to which the first had joined themselves. These negotiations were entered upon the following
year,

year, and on the 30th of September, 1759, the court sent two of its members, under an escort of a detachment of 200 men of the garrison, and 450 negroes of the colony, with the necessary presents. They agreed to an amnesty for one year, and at the expiration of that term the council named and authorised commissioners, who with the negroes entered into articles to this effect.

“ 1. That the negroes should be acknowledged as free, and that every thing that had formerly passed should be forgotten.

“ 2. That they never should be molested any more, and that such persons as presumed to do it, should be punished.

“ 3. That the negroes should act offensively and defensively in favour of the colony against its enemies, as well within as without. 4. That they should

“ have certain presents. 5. That they should be at liberty to negotiate and traffic at Paramaribo, but not more than ten persons at one time. 6. That when

“ they wished to speak with the Governor or at the court, their number should not exceed five, and that each should

“ have

“ have a distinguishing mark. 7. That
“ they should deliver up the slaves that
“ had deserted since October 14, 1759;
“ to the day the peace was signed, and
“ for every slave given up, they should
“ have from 10 to 50 florins, according
“ to the distance they should bring him.”

These articles were entered into in October, 1760, at the plantation Rama, opposite to the negroe camp, sixteen of their chief captains attending as deputies on the occasion, who swore after their manner to observe them and keep them inviolably. Having taken a cup made of a small gourd, the negroes put into it a little water and earth; then each of the contractors made an incision in his arm, in order to procure some drops of blood, which they beat up well with the water and earth; of this the whites as well as the negroes were obliged to drink as a solemn signal of the fidelity of their engagements. After which the negroe priest pronounced imprecations on the heads of those who should presume to violate the peace; and with a view of removing all distrust,

distrust, the deputies went to Auka to sign and confirm the articles.

On their return, they were accompanied by five of the principal negro Chiefs, one of whom on his landing at the fort was known by a Mr. Thomas to have been the murderer of his father, but who was obliged to smother his indignation for the public good.

CHAP. V.

Of the Situation of the Colony of Surinam, its Soil, its Boundaries, and other Particulars.

THE colony of Surinam, which is a part of Guiana, is situated in about six degrees north latitude, and about 34 degrees west longitude from the meridian of the isle of Teneriff. Being thus but six degrees distant from the middle of the torrid zone, it is of course very hot, and there is a perpetual equinox, the sun rising and setting at six. The length of the night then is equal to that of the day, at least its difference is scarcely perceptible.

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The climate in general is unhealthy, but more so at night and in the evening, owing to the abundant vapours exhaled in the day being more or less corrupted, the soil being in general marshy, and causing an unequal temperature of the air in particular places.

The seasons in the torrid zone may be reduced to two, winter and summer, each continuing six months. The distinction of these seasons is founded principally on their being dry and wet. The dry season is the summer and time of harvest, the stormy, windy and rainy season is the winter, which is never so cold as to freeze water.

From the end of November to the month of July, the heat is temperate, owing to the clouds that moderate the great heat of the sun, and which yield plentiful and frequent rains, which, added to a north-east wind continually blowing, refreshes the air a little; but, during the rest of the year, the heat is excessive, especially when it does not rain. As soon as the rains begin after dry seasons, every
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thing shoots, and the fields look green which before resembled the dry sands, being scorched and burnt up by the sun.

Immediately after the rains succeeds immoderate heat, which is sometimes so excessive, and the atmosphere so burning hot, as to produce in the humours of the body a ready dissolution, followed by a perspiration so abundant and continued, that water as soon as drank will exsude at the pores as we have seen from a wet sponge, when it has been pressed. It is in these hot seasons, and from a variety of weather, that the splenetic disorders of this country are so general.

The soil is a white clay, so fertile, that whatever is planted in it grows exceedingly fast. The northern coasts of this continent are covered with a vast quantity of large fine trees of every kind, and in many places are large forests consisting entirely of cocoa nut trees.

The land in general is low, level, clayey, a little sandy, moist, and deep, except the kitchen gardens. They never manure their crops. Coffee, sugar, cocoa, and

cotton, require only the earth to be grubbed, and the land drained.

The coast, which is about 70 leagues in extent, has not a single spot but what may be grubbed; besides the great rivers, in which settlements are begun, and of which the least is navigable for 30 leagues, there are many small rivers capable of receiving floops, and which water a very fertile soil.

The river Corentin, which is five leagues east of that of Berbice, is more than a league wide at its entrance; but there are without, sand banks which extend more than three leagues in breadth, and render the passage difficult; there are however three fathoms water at low tide near the banks. Entering the river, there are three small islands sufficiently found, situated north and south, along-side of which there is good anchorage in five or six fathoms of water.

The land on both sides is low, and covered with trees; the pass with good anchorage is on the west side, opposite the middle island. The little river Nykesa
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casts itself into the sea, very near that of Corentin on the east side, so that it seems to have but one fine entrance two or three leagues wide.

At ten leagues distance eastwards, are the rivers Copename and Saramaca, which join as they empty into the sea; but there are only three fathoms water at the entrance, when the tide is out.

Copename is on the west, and Saramaca on the east. There are no habitations on these rivers, but some negro villages. An attempt has been made more than once, to obtain permission to form settlements there, by digging a canal of communication between the river of Surinam and Wanika creek, which discharges itself into the river Saramaca; but as the bed of the last river is higher than that of the first, it has hitherto not been judged proper to be done, for fear of consequences, notwithstanding the great advantages in prospect. The sources of the rivers Copename and Saramaca are not known.

The river Surinam lies four leagues to the east of Copename and Saramaca, and is that which gives name to all the colony settled as well upon its banks, as upon the neighbouring rivers that fall into it, such as the Commewyne, Cottica; and others less considerable.

The mouth of the river Surinam is near two miles in breadth, and when the tide is out, has three fathom of water; on the right and left there are banks of sand and mud, on which at the time of flood there is very little water, and which are near two gun-shots wide. The lands on the sea coasts are low, and often overflowed: a league from the mouth, on the east coast, the Commewyne empties itself into the river Surinam; its entrance, which is three or four fathom deep, is defended by the fort New Amsterdam on the south, and by a battery on the north; these forts are so situated as to defend also the river Surinam.

Four leagues from the fort New Amsterdam, in going up the river Commewyne, is fort Sommelsdyk, so called from

the governor of that name who built it, lying to the south of the place where the Commewyne joins the Cottica; the banks of both these rivers are full of coffee and sugar plantations.

Three leagues from this fort there is a church, on the south bank of the Cottica; there is also a similar church on the Commewyne, at about the same distance, near the plantation Curcabo, close to the place where the little river Pirica falls into it.

North of the church, a branch of the Cottica runs due north, and falls into the sea, at the distance of rather more than about two leagues, which is called Motte Creek.

On the bank of this creek, half a league from the coast, is a light-house with a lanthorn to give signals to ships coming in; which is indeed the more necessary as the whole of this coast, for the space of more than twenty leagues, is flat and level.

Beyond this is the river Marewyne, which the French call Maroni, at the dis-

tance of about 23 leagues to the east of the river Surinam towards the isle of Cayenne. It is very dangerous for Dutch ships coming from Holland to the river Surinam, owing to its great resemblance to the entrance into that river; for those who have been unfortunate enough to enter there, could seldom get out again, owing to the quantity of sand banks, and the rocks they met with; the bottom is besides so muddy, that vessels will frequently stick, so as to render it difficult to set them afloat again.

But to return to the river Surinam: its entrance is again defended on the west by two batteries or redoubts, whose fires reach that of the fort New Amsterdam. Beyond these forts is a bar across the river; above this bar is fort Zelandia, and the town or bourg of Paramaribo, before which there is a road with good anchorage of two fathoms at low water. The river Surinam runs very far up the country, but it has not yet been traced to its source; it receives both on right and left several little rivers, on the banks of which, as well as on those of the river Surinam, are

are a number of plantations. At about forty leagues distance from its mouth, are cataracts which interrupt the navigation, and the whole country is so covered with wood, as not to be easily penetrated. There are also several mountains very difficult to pass.

Advancing up the river, beyond Paramaribo, we come to a little bourg or township called Thorarica, situated on the western bank, once the chief residence of the English, but which has no other inhabitants now than a few Jew planters.

Eight leagues higher up, on the eastern side, is a village inhabited also by Jews, in which is a fine large synagogue. The colony did not anciently extend beyond this place; but the people who came to Surinam in 1684, with M. de Sommelsdyk's sister, carried their plantations a great way further on both sides the river. About six leagues further up in the country is a famous mountain, called The Blue Mountain, or Mount Parnassus, where a guard is constantly kept, to watch

watch the conduct of the Indians, and fugitive negroes.

The river Surinam is certainly one of the principal rivers in the whole colony; its course is north-west to the sea, and south-east to its source. The tide makes a great way up in this river; but at new and full moon it is apt to overflow its banks.

At high water large ships can enter this river with ease; and the tide is also beneficial to the sugar mills, which are generally worked by water. Some of the rivers in this colony are rapid, and others are slow in their course; their waters are generally brackish, so that none but the negroes can drink them, who are extremely fond of every thing salt. Vessels are obliged to take two tides to water; and that at the town of Paramaribo, where there are cataracts, and heads of fresh water. The inhabitants use only rain water, which they collect in cisterns, earthen vessels, or hogheads; but they use well water chiefly for the kitchen.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Town of Paramaribo, the Number of Colonists, and of their Government, Political and Military.

THE town of Paramaribo, once called Middelbourg, is the chief place of the whole colony; it was formerly a town inhabited by Indians, and is situated upon the west bank of the river, two leagues from its mouth; it is regularly built upon a sandy and gravelly foundation, so that the stones do not incommode the feet; but on the other hand, in very hot weather, the same gravel will scorch the thickest shoes.

The streets are very noble, and sufficiently large; almost all straight as a line, and ornamented with orange trees in form of walks.

All the houses, to the number of 1,200, are very elegantly built, since the luxury of Europe has crossed the seas. The colonists, not willing to imitate the simplicity

city of the Romans, have given every imaginary embellishment to their buildings, ornamented them with fashies and superb frontispieces, and raised them upon foundations of brick to the height of three or four feet.

The governor's house, and that of the commandant, are built with brick, but others solely with wood. The governor can go out of his garden into the Fort Zealandia.

The *Place d'armes* is situated before the governor's house, where the garrison mounts guard daily, at eight in the morning.

The town-house, where the governor's council meets, is situated in the *Place d'armes*. It is a magnificent edifice, under which are the prisons for debtors and for criminals. There is a very fine hospital for the garrison, and a reformed church, where there are sermons every Sunday, in Dutch in the morning, and French in the afternoon: this church is on the second story of the old town-house, where the civil court of justice is actually held.

The colony supports, at its own expence,

pence, two Dutch preachers, and a French one, who have each annually 100*l.* sterling, besides a house or its value, and three slaves at their disposal. Their widows also have a pension of 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* sterling. There is also a superb Lutheran church, where there is service twice every Sunday, by two ministers supported at the expence of the congregation. The German and Portuguese Jews, of which there are a pretty great number, have each of them a very fine synagogue.

Although there are very few poor in the colony, there are however two charitable foundations, the one belonging to the reformed church, the other to the Lutheran, for the reception of indigent orphans, and such old people as are past their labour, so that no beggars are seen in the streets, as in the greatest part of the towns in Europe.

There is also a chamber of orphans, governed by four commissioners and a secretary, established to receive, administer, and regulate the property of persons dying intestate.

They reckon at present from 4 to 5,000 white inhabitants, including the garrison, which ought to consist of 1,200 regular troops; and they estimate the number of slaves of both sexes to be about 50,000.

The political government is composed of the most respectable inhabitants of the colony.

The Governor, who has under him a Commandant, exercises supreme authority throughout the colony, in the name of the States General, and the society; as well with respect to the government, as military affairs, because the troops are under his command, as colonel commandant. However, in political matters of importance, he is obliged to convene and consult the whole council, of which he is the president, as well as of the civil council of justice. He has but one voice in each tribunal, but he nominates to all the vacant offices, both civil and military, unless appointments are otherwise made by the society; and he gives orders for every thing that may become necessary to be

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be done both for the support and protection of the colony.

The governing council, and that of criminal justice, is composed of the Governor, the commandant, who is the first counsellor, a clerk of the court, a secretary, and nine other members, who are chosen by the Governor out of eighteen named by the inhabitants.

The court of civil justice, the counsellors of which are named and elected by the Governor and council, is composed of the Governor, who is president, a secretary, and ten counsellors. This court, entirely independent of the first council, does not judge but in civil matters; but an appeal lies from it to the council of higher powers.

There is also a third subordinate council, where matters of finance are adjusted, with an appeal to the court of civil justice. This is composed of a vice-president, secretary, and nine commissioners, renewable every fourth year, except the secretary, whose office is for life.

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The garrison consists of two battalions, six companies in each, who with a company of artillery, consisting of fifty men, ought to form the number of 1,200; the half of which are paid by the society, the other half by the inhabitants of the colony.

These troops are under the command of the governor, who is colonel in chief, having under him a commandant at the head of the second battalion, with two lieutenant colonels, two majors, six captains, as many lieutenants, and as many ensigns, besides a clerk, an auditor, a commissary in chief for the magazines of provisions, and a book-keeper; all whose salaries are paid by the society, as well as those of the physician, and surgeon-major, who have the care of the military hospital.

Besides the regular troops, the inhabitants form twelve companies of militia, of which the house-keepers of Paramaribo compose the first four; the remaining eight, formed by the planters, are those of the upper and lower division of the Com-mewyne;

mewyne; those of the upper and lower division of the Cottica, that of the creek Matapica, that of Thorarica, or the river Surinam; that of the creek Para, and that of the Jews; each of which has a captain, a lieutenant, and an ensign, nominated by the Governor and his council.

The captains are obliged to keep an accurate register of all the white men in their respective divisions, in order to know the exact number of men fit to bear arms in case of need, for the expeditions against the fugitive negroes.

The wages of the clerks of the courts, schoolmasters, readers, and many other officers, as well for mending the ways, repairing the bridges, providing food for the slaves employed in public works, and forage for the horses, &c. are defrayed by the inhabitants of the colony.

For the use of the planters and cultivators, there are sworn surveyors, an assayer of sugar, and a second for treacle; a commissary general of the garrison, a director of the hospital, an interpreter of the Caraibe language, and a translator into that of the negroes.

C H A P. VII.

Of the Produce of the Colony of Surinam.

IT seems as if the Dutch were born to find out the value of such overflowed and marshy lands as those at Surinam, which other people have found only to be a soil unfortunate and ungrateful.

In spite of the enormous difficulties of such an undertaking, their courage and perseverance have found means to drain these lands, and fertilize them, through a great number of settlements, so as to give a property, and produce conveniencies that have distinguished them above all the English and French possessions that are even more flourishing. But this has not been effected without exposing themselves to a thousand inconveniencies, even at the risk of their own lives and those of their slaves, in breaking and grubbing up a soil which naturally throws up very pernicious exhalations. How much labour must it have cost

cost the new possessors to destroy the forests, to burn them, and drain the land by means of canals and a great number of sluices; in short, to be able to cultivate ground for plantations of sugar, coffee, and other articles, such as cocoa and cotton! But the success of the first colonists presently induced new ones to follow them. By degrees they have extended their settlements to 20 or 25 leagues from the town of Paramaribo; and would have pushed them further had they not been stopped by the fugitive negroes, who took shelter in the woods which are almost inaccessible, and who are molesting the inhabitants from time to time with frequent invasions.

In the infancy of this colony, the society, to encourage industry, gave each of the new settlers 1,500 acres of land, and often more; but since their numbers have increased, these grants have been reduced to 500 acres; and yet in the space of 100 years and more they have not exhausted or disposed of the whole extent of the colony; and such a grant is more than sufficient

to make the fortune of an honest man, and that of his posterity.

Holland was presently sensible of the rapid progress of Surinam. The Dutch merchants especially were easily led to interest themselves in the plantations, by advancing money to the new inhabitants, to put them in a way of procuring every necessary assistance to ameliorate their possessions, and carry them to the highest state of possible advancement.

Some became sharers in the plantations; others lent money upon mortgage at a premium, and 6l. per cent. interest, and received other advantages in the line of commerce.

Sugar was the first object of their culture, because sugar canes, as some say, grow there spontaneously; but whether it be so or not, it is certain that this branch of commerce has been carried on long enough to convince the Hollanders of the great profits of such an article of trade, from the quantity of sugar it has received from this single colony. But the colonists finding, in length of time, that it began
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to lessen in value on account of neighbouring colonies furnishing the same in great abundance, which of course lowered its price, they applied themselves to the culture of coffee, which was as much used as sugar; and it is to the father of the late M. le Comte de Néale that the colonists owe the culture of this article, which is now become the principal riches of Surinam, from the prodigious quantity they grow, and its great consumption through a large part of Europe.

Encouraged by the high price of this new production, the coffee plantations multiplied, and a pound of coffee, for three years after the breaking out of the war in 1744, was worth 17 *d.* English, and even more. After the peace it fell a good deal, but rose again in 1755, during the war between France and England, on account of the navigation being interrupted, so as to raise the price to 10 *d.* a pound. In 1767, on the news being received that coffee had failed in Martinico, owing to a violent hurricane that injured the crop, Surinam coffee sold at 12 *d.* a

pound the same year ; which occasioned in the nation a circulation of near 750,000*l.* sterling, arising from the coffee alone of this colony ; not to mention the sugar, cocoa, and cotton, which are three very considerable articles, as may be seen in the table of the products of Surinam in this tract.

Let us reflect a little on the annual profit of all these productions, and it will be inconceivable that, after having got for many years such high prices for their commodities, the people of Surinam should not have profited by these times, and discharged their debts, at least in part. The truth is, they have been strangers to œconomy, and a spirit of luxury has prevailed among them. They flattered themselves that the price would never be lower ; and they have shewn a disposition rather to encrease their expences than lessen their debts.

Cocoa, which they began to plant in 1733, is a third branch of commerce which the colonists have cultivated with great success. In 1774, they gathered 506,610 pounds,

pounds, which produced 16,887 *l.* sterling.

In 1735, they began to grow cotton. This fourth branch of commerce, which indeed they have very much increased, should have been more encouraged, considering its cultivation is not more expensive than that of coffee; but as coffee has been more sought after, the greatest part of the new planters have applied themselves sanguinely to this production, fancying that they should thus make their fortunes. But events have shewn the contrary.

Coffee is so much fallen off, that they gain scarcely sufficient by it to pay the interest of the money they borrowed. They find, but too late, that it is far more advantageous to a planter not to make any single production his object, when he may grow many things at the same time, because should one turn out unfavourable, a second or a third might make up for the deficiency.

Hence it is that the planter is able to bear the failure of a crop, or the low price

it may occasionally fetch at market; that is, by growing more kinds of things than one; this being the only means of keeping up an equilibrium of commerce in bad seasons.

Of every branch of commerce to the Dutch, sugar is the most considerable, and the most lucrative to America, not excepting even her diamonds, or her gold and silver mines, and it is at the same time less precarious. Sugar is one thing that contributes to encrease navigation, and gives Holland a lucrative manufacture: that of the growth of Surinam is, and has been many years since, superior to the sugar of other colonies, and her other productions are not less distinguished for their goodness than their quantity. Very fine fir too is also imported from thence, wood for inlaid work, and all sorts of joinery.

Wood also for dying grows there in great quantities, and is a good article of commerce, being in much estimation with the Dutch.

What

What advantages must result to a country to receive from one single colony articles of so much value, and to send out every thing the inhabitants may want for the support of themselves and their agriculture!

Commerce is undoubtedly of most utility to the Dutch; but on the other hand, it is much to be wished that they would take into consideration the planters in their colonies, whether it be in the sale of their commodities, or in the expedition of making their remittances; for the greatest part of the correspondents of Surinam study only to enrich themselves at the expence of the planters, by a destructive monopoly in all the articles of commerce which they receive from them. If the great number of correspondents in Holland for the colony of Surinam be considered, it must convince us that the advantages they derive must be great; or that the colony is of late become so flourishing as to multiply its correspondents annually.

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Even captains of ships and pilots carry on negotiations between Holland and Surinam; which proves how interesting and lucrative a commerce with that colony must be, where every one is desirous of being concerned. But if its correspondents ought not to rely on any but prudent and frugal colonists, it is their duty also to fulfil their engagements with them. If they do this, it is very allowable to profit by the advantages that can result from circumstances.

But it is now-a-days a general custom, especially in commerce with colonies, to keep the planters there under a yoke, by demanding such great interest for money advanced, such great prices for commission, and by charging such great expences upon sales, as swallow up at critical times almost all the planter's profit, and puts it often out of his power to pay the interest of the debt he owes his correspondent.

After what has been said respecting the productions of Surinam, we cannot represent to government an object more interesting, more worthy of its attention, and

and of that of every good citizen, than the means of enriching this colony to the utmost, and affording it the immediate protection of the State.

An attention so important, and so essential to the prosperity of this colony, demands certainly the care of the state. An administration of this nature requires an authority and an activity which can never be found in an exclusive company, or in any commercial society whatever.

It is in the power only of a state to watch over all the abuses introduced into a government subordinate to its supreme authority, and to enforce a rigorous observance of its laws. The more government will deign to examine into the riches of this flourishing province, the readier it will take under its immediate protection a territory that must prove of so great advantage to the nation.

C H A P. VIII.

*On the Commerce of the Dutch with the
Colony of Surinam.*

NOTHING proves better the extent of commerce between Holland and Surinam than the number of vessels which sail for this colony. From the year 1750 to 1774, 1,230 vessels of different sizes left the port of Amsterdam, without reckoning those from Rotterdam and Zeland, which amounts to about 50 annually, as will be shewn by the table in the course of these sheets.

Each vessel, one with another, produces 500*l.* sterling in freight for merchandize exported to Surinam, without taking into the calculation the money which arises from passengers, and the bricks which serve as ballast.

The freight out, in return from Surinam with merchandize, is calculated at 2,666*l.* sterling, which, with the 500*l.* to Surinam, makes 3,166*l.* sterling each ship.

Hence

Hence it follows, that the freight of the 50 vessels out and into Holland, that is, the freight of exportation and importation, amounts annually to the sum of 158,300*l.* to which may be added the returns of six vessels in the negroe trade, viz. 10,000*l.* each, in the produce of slaves; so that we find the navigation only of the colony of Surinam to be worth annually to the Dutch 218,300*l.* sterling, and for the 26 years 5,675,800*l.*

This branch of commerce, one would imagine, is sufficiently considerable to engage the nation to find means of procuring the inhabitants of Surinam a solid credit, it being one part of the riches of the state.

Commerce consists in the importation and exportation of necessaries. The colonists of Surinam have the same wants with us in Europe, excepting only winter garments, which the heat of the climate renders useless. They have neither wine, beer, spirits, (except indeed rum) flour, salt, nor any kind of manufacture. All the masonry for their buildings is sent to them,

them, sugar-mills and every thing relative to that branch, all sorts of furniture, locks, stuffs, cloth, linen, iron ware, dress, stockings, hats, and utensils of every kind; arms, ammunition, and in general every thing which the slaves have occasion for.

In all this merchandize the Dutch derive a very considerable profit; it is a branch of commerce very beneficial. For there is no one article in which they do not gain 50 *per cent.* and more; and as monopoly of course must be destructive, raising the price of merchandize above what it will bear, it is the duty of a wise and enlightened government to watch narrowly into this, especially when it relates to a country at so great a distance from the necessaries of life.

The merchants of Amsterdam have long considered the colonies as the most useful branch of commerce to them. Correspondents generally take two *per cent.* commission for sending out merchandize, and as much for the sale of returns; not to reckon the charge of warehouse, which they too well know not to make an advantage

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tage of, as well as of insurance, which is another considerable object. Nay further, they take 6 *per cent.* interest on all the money they advance, and at the same time borrow the money at 4 *per cent.*

There are those also who even purchase plantations in order to sell them again. After all this, is it to be wondered at, if merchants study to supplant each other by establishing correspondence, especially at Surinam; this colony, without contradiction, being more beneficial to the Republic than their East India settlements? The number of merchants indeed is so increased within these few years, that they are rather a hurt to that credit they would otherwise support, if there were not so many.

Experience proves evidently, that too great credit in favour of the planters of Surinam has been the principal cause of its decay, and of the decrease of its commerce, brought about by the low price of its merchandize, the wars that colony is obliged to keep up with the negroes, and the knavery of some of its correspondents, who have made advances beyond their

abilities, and endeavoured to support the colonists at the expence of the public, and many individuals who have been unfortunate enough to be prevailed upon to give their ready money to people who have abused their confidence. The consequence of which is too fatal and too manifest not to attract the attention of all those who are directly interested.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Commerce of Surinam in Bills of Exchange.

THE continual circulation of bills of exchange represents gold or silver; and as these metals are very scarce at Surinam, they have substituted paper in their stead.

In the infancy of this settlement, money, that is cash, was not only very scarce, but the colonists found a failure in their means of increasing their possessions.

After having laid the first foundations, they were obliged to borrow money to cultivate

cultivate those lands they had acquired by grants. The Dutch, ever active in their own interest, gave these new cultivators the greatest encouragement by advancing them money. Those who had made some progress in their possessions found no difficulty to get money or credit in Holland from one merchant or another: but for which they mortgaged their property as a security to the lender. For this purpose it was necessary that their possessions should be valued by sworn surveyors, that proper mortgages might be drawn, so as to enable them to get money on credit equal to the value of five eighths of their property, which there were people ready enough to lend, for a certain number of years; on condition that the planter should consign to them and them only the produce of his land, leaving him however at liberty, at the expiration of half the term, to redeem either the whole or any part of the debt contracted.

If however, after some years, the credit of five eighths was not sufficient to enable them to carry on their plantations, a new

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estimation of their improved property was to be made agreeable to the first, and under the same conditions, in order to augment their credit, but without exceeding the five eighths.

In this manner was the credit of these colonists formed with the Dutch for the improvement of their possessions. They are so much extended since, and Surinam is become so flourishing, that many persons have abused this credit by the most hazardous undertakings, which has in fact almost overset their trade. The great quantities of merchandize however exported from Surinam, and the high prices it fetched in Holland, have not a little contributed to their success.

Many of the proprietors settled in Europe, took this favourable opportunity to sell their estates; and they found a number of buyers of all kinds in Holland willing to give even 30 *per cent.* more than their real value. The easiness with which the possessors obtained credit, induced persons of no fortune to become purchasers of plantations on the rashest speculations.

It

It was in 1767 and 1768, that the sale of these possessions or plantations were at the highest, as well in Holland as at Surinam; when the merchants of Amsterdam sent full powers to persons of supposed credit in the colony, to advance the colonists any sums they wanted.

Those who were most in credit had no difficulty to obtain the sums they required: among the crowd of borrowers, there were persons who even purchased plantations without having a penny to pay for them. To give the reader an idea of this kind of purchase, he must be told, that the buyer by illicit means gets the estate, valued at 20 or 30 *per cent.* more than its real worth at any time, and more than he engages to pay for it. On this estimation he mortgages it for five eighths of its supposed value, which he pays to the seller, and gives him his bills of exchange, with perhaps a respectable indorser on the back, payable a year after date or longer, for the remainder of the money; and if in the course of this year, he does not sell the estate again at a price

by which he can gain, he will even sell it, for current cash, (which is of more value than paper) in order to honour his bills, at a loss of 15 or 20 *per cent.*

This kind of business continued long enough to ruin a number of honest men who were so weak as to sign their names to facilitate such purchases. To day, they bought plantations perhaps for 16,000 *l.* sterling, and sold them a few days after for 2,000 advantage, and by the means I have pointed out; so that some enriched themselves by means of their credit, and others were ruined for want of proper caution in such purchases, and by relying too much on the honour of these adventurers.

By this commerce in paper money, the merchants, on whom it was drawn, for want of sufficient effects, owing to too extensive a credit, suffered bills to be protested to the amount of 300,000 *l.* sterling; to which may be added 25 *per cent.* re-exchanges, and other expences of protesting, which the drawers are bound to pay, but for which the indorsers are responsi-

ble on failure of the drawers. Thus we see that the sums encreased 75,000*l.* by being returned not paid. Through an inability to pay them on their return, many drawers were forced to sell their property secretly to make good their payments, and others became bankrupts, carrying with them to Europe all that they could; in the mean time the indorsers were the victims of a commerce so contrary to public faith. In the midst of this dreadful crisis, happened some great failures at Amsterdam, which totally overthrew the credit of the colony.

Thus the intrigues and misconduct of some of its correspondents, as well as the low price of its merchandize, gave the first blow to the colony of Surinam, whose further decay has been the dreadful consequence.

Even persons of established credit there have seen themselves on the verge of ruin, by indorsing bills of exchange, which they were afterwards obliged to pay. Had it not been for these unfortunate circumstances, aggravated by the revolt of the

negroes, the colony would ere this have been in the most flourishing situation.

Such revolutions will necessarily bring on the fall of a state, if its government does not apply its whole attention to correct the abuses in the commerce of its inhabitants, and which are the causes of these disasters. Though a colony so rich in its productions can never support itself without a credit proportionable to the greatness of its state, yet an illicit commerce daily carried on by bills of exchange, and negotiated at 12, 15, and 20 *per cent.* discount to procure assistance, proves a toleration of usury, which is absolutely contrary to the laws of any legislative body.

Experience then shews, that a people may be unfortunate in the bosom of riches, and in the midst of all the wealth in the world.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the Coins current at Surinam.

IN the infancy of the colony, all coins passed for the same value they did in Holland, but their great scarcity presently raised them to 20 *per cent.* above their real value. That which is most current, as well in gold as in silver, is the coin of Holland. Piaftres also are current, and almost every small piece of money; but the least is a coin in value three pence, for the use of the slaves, who traffic occasionally, and who are unacquainted with the small coin of Holland.

The great scarcity of current coin has so raised its value, that those who have it will not change it for government notes without an advantage of five, six, or seven *per cent.* The principal receivers of the society presently became the bankers of the colony, because all the duties they collected were paid in species, which they remitted to Holland by bills of exchange. This

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change

change of coin into paper, in the hands of the receivers, became a very lucrative branch of business, in so much that the government took it up, and issued out paper money, under a pretence of convenience to the inhabitants; but which, by the great quantity circulated, is little else than borrowing their money. The government, however, studying more their own interest than the convenience of the inhabitants, have profited by this scheme, and appropriated those advantages to themselves, which the receivers enjoyed before.

It was then in 1760, that the government of Surinam circulated cards, bearing the value of fifty pence sterling, sealed with the seal of the society, and signed by two of the council. This money was deposited in the hands of the receiver to be distributed equally to all those who might want it in exchange for other good bills of exchange; so that in a little time the receiver's office became a bank, with a capital of about 60,000 *l.* sterling. The end of this negotiation presently shewed itself, for the government laid out the money

money on mortgage at eight *per cent.* interest, so as to bring in a clear revenue of 5,000*l.* sterling.

It is universally allowed, that in proportion to the interest money bears in any state, the scarcer current coin is, and the more commerce languishes in that state; but when current coin is plentiful, it is certain that interest falls, and commerce flourishes. It is a general maxim, that commerce produces money, and money in coin produces commerce. It is also incontestible, that usurious papers, or too great interest, is a pernicious credit, a credit which its own usury destroys.

Hence it follows, that if the government of Surinam, instead of lending out money at usury, would apply it by a wise administration to furnish the inhabitants with plenty of species, or current coin, interest would immediately fall; and they would not be obliged to have recourse to bills of exchange, so troublesome and so disadvantageous to the people, for want of a greater circulation of species. On the other hand, the government would
not

not convert, as it now does, the property of the people to its own emolument, by a mercantile commerce in fabricating money so prejudicial to the inhabitants, and to trade in general.

In short, since the introduction of paper money into the country, they have found it difficult to convert it into paper negotiable in Holland. It is part of the policy of a wise and enlightened government, to take care that the interest of money bears proportion to the nature of commerce, and the circumstances in which a nation is; to take salutary measures to facilitate the advancement of a state; to prevent every thing that leans towards monopoly, or usury, which is the pest of any country, and as difficult to be got the better of as an epidemic disorder.

Government cannot be too careful to procure its subjects plenty of what they need; in a word, had the government of Surinam, seeing the dearth of species among the inhabitants, instead of increasing their own capital by an interest of eight *per cent.* reduced this interest to half,

half, it would have made the borrowers happy, and would have furnished them with means, aided by their industry and a prudent œconomy, to have repaired their finances.

The true test of a nation's being in a flourishing situation, is lending at a small interest; and not without reason, especially in all urgent cases, where there is no other resource than the mode of borrowing. If it was possible, without injuring the credit of individuals, to reduce for a certain number of years, the interest from *six per cent.* to four, it is evident, that the debtors in the colony, by a strict œconomy, would in a short time pay their debts insensibly, and become presently very opulent; provided they could abridge themselves only of their idle expences.

It is true, I own, that such a reduction would cause a derangement in credit, and a real loss to those who advanced their money at *six per cent.*; but it will always be more advantageous to take an honest interest than to lose all, as many have done in these critical times.

But,

But, without going any further, if the Republic of Holland, instead of paying off as it does annually the capitals it borrows at two and a half, and two and three quarters *per cent.* interest, would apply the money to the colony of Surinam, under a well directed and prudent administration, I am of opinion, that it would be more advantageous to the States; as by this means they would keep that wealth in their own country, which otherwise goes out of it. By this plan of acting, they would collect all the wealth of individuals; the colonies subject to the Republic would become more flourishing, the citizens would be lastingly happy in their possessions, and commerce and navigation would flourish more and more; while, under a particular and exclusive administration, as the colony of Surinam is at present, all these advantages are lost by an inevitable decay.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Revenues of the Society of Surinam, and of the Country.

IMMEDIATELY after the first ten years of the inhabitants settling, the society, by virtue of its grant, levied a poll tax. This duty consists in paying annually fifty pence sterling a head for all above twelve years of age, and 25 pence for all between the age of three and twelve indiscriminately, as well for the whites, as the slaves; which brings in a revenue of 12,500*l.* sterling.

All Dutch vessels are subject to a duty going into, and coming out of port, as are all English vessels. The first pay 5*s.* *per* last, and the English double; this raises annually about 7,500*l.*

All English merchandize pays a duty on importation of five *per cent.* and as much for the exportation of treacle, which produces annually near 5,000*l.* sterling.

The

The sale-office, where is paid a duty of five *per cent.* on all common sales, and two and a half *per cent.* on the sale of slaves imported from the coast of Africa, yields an annual revenue of about 11,000*l.* a year.

In the year 1771, the duties on the exports of all the productions of the colony, amounted to the sum of 21,666*l.* sterling.

Coffee pays 15*d.* sterling *per cwt.* cocoa and cotton 35 pence, and a hogf-head of sugar 20*d.*

From all these taxes belonging to the society, it is plain that their revenue may rise annually to 55,000*l.* sterling.

The revenue of the country consists in collecting from the inhabitants imposts, which are laid upon them more and more, though they are contrary to the privileges of their charter.

Besides the common poll tax, they have found it necessary to levy a new one, to support the expences of the war against the negroes, and for the defence of the colony. The society, for this purpose, has established a receiver to collect from each inhabitant,

inhabitant, whether planter, merchant, or artist, 20 *d.* a head, and as much for each slave; which brings in about 6,000 *l.* sterling a year.

This contribution not appearing sufficient, government found it necessary to make every inhabitant pay into the same office, four *per cent.* on their annual gains, to be declared upon oath; and I am assured, without being deceived; that this levy produces annually near 34,000 *l.* sterling; to this, if we add the produce of the annual poll tax, it will amount to 40,000 *l.*

After such imposts, have not the colonists reason to groan under the weight of an expence, which will absorb in time the little they have left, if they have not relief?

The other taxes are as follow: 5 *s.* on a hogshead of beer; 20 *s.* on a barrel of red wine; 40 *s.* on a pipe of Madeira; and one penny a bottle on all other wines; 50 *d.* on a small cask of gin or brandy; 50 *l.* for a tavern licence, and 25 *l.* for the licence of every other publick house; all
which

which together produces annually about 8,000*l.* sterling, according to the consumption.

A tax is also paid to the country for houses according to their value; the same for the pasturage of beasts; 33*s.* 4*d.* for a coach; 16*s.* 8*d.* for a chaise, and as much for a saddle horse, which brings in an annual revenue of 1,000*l.* sterling.

From all these imposts, it is evident, that the country receives a revenue of about 49,000*l.* a year, more or less; add this sum to the society's revenue, and the annual amount is 100,000*l.* sterling.

The society of Surinam has the privilege of naming the receivers of its revenues, who are also at its pay; so are the clerks of their offices.

The receivers of the country's revenue are appointed by the Governor with the consent of his council, as are the salaries for the revenues they collect.

By the multiplicity of all these duties and taxes, imposed upon so small a number of colonists, it is easy to judge of the great mass of riches in this province, so
useful

useful to a nation, and so interesting to the revenues of the state.

But at the same time we must not omit to acknowledge, that the inhabitants are greatly overtaxed, and too overloaded with duties, to expect that they can any long time bear the burden, at least in its present critical circumstances, joined to the entire loss of their credit, the low prices their productions bring in Europe, the great interest they pay for what they earn, and every other expence for the support of their possessions.

The particulars which have been related are sufficient, I should suppose, to lead to a just estimation of the strength and weakness of this colony, constantly subject and exposed to revolutions, which must bring on, without the most powerful and efficacious succour, new misfortunes, and those of the most dreadful kind.

Let us pass now to the general causes of its decay, to draw from thence consequences, relative to the importance of the subject.

CHAP. XI.

General Causes of the Decay of the Colony of Surinam, and Remedies for the same.

THE road I have taken throughout these pages, in following the different periods through which the colony of Surinam has run, to arrive at its highest degree of elevation, naturally leads me to enquire here in particular what are the general causes of its decay; for which I shall attempt a remedy.

Among the first causes, the continual war the inhabitants have been obliged to maintain against the frequent attacks from the negroes on the continent, without contradiction, gave the first blow to the commerce of Surinam, from the great expences the colonists have been at in supporting this war for many years, in order to defend their possessions.

This may, in some measure, be remedied in future, by the colonists treating the present and future slaves in a milder way, which

which will prevent an increase in the number of their enemies. They should never be punished but when they richly deserve it. It is certainly the interest of the planters to treat their slaves with humanity. They should never suffer them to want the necessaries of life; they should shew no partiality to one more than another; nor should they be allowed to have more wives than one, which, among the negroes, is dangerous on account of their jealousy; they should take care of them, and be tender to them when sick, and not impose more work upon them than they are able to perform; and should never expect them to work either on Sundays nor on the first days of the solemn festivals, as is too often the case. In punishing them, they should be moderate, consulting rather reason than passion; for it is unfortunately too often the custom to beat them with a rigour bordering upon barbarity.

The negroes are naturally good and easily governed; and they are laborious when not discouraged. No kind of men have more good understanding in their

way; they even shew it among themselves before they are civilized, having a great deal of good will, which at the time that it gives them strength to work, gives them the necessary dispositions for it.

They ought not to be abridged of their hours of rest, nor employed at such times as are allotted them to work for themselves: It is a general custom to give them the Sundays to themselves, in which they work in their own gardens. In short, they should be rendered happy: It is not difficult to do it, and a little contents them.

The negroes are in general sober and patient; but if their masters will not give them time to cultivate a little ground for their own living; if they order them to work at night and beyond their accustomed hours, under the pretence of watching: In a word, if they do not give them what they have a right to expect, they will naturally steal, and make incursions upon their neighbours. If their masters expect them to be docile and obedient, they must be just towards them, and listen to the

voice of humanity. He who is deaf to this does not deserve to be ranked among the class of men.

The second cause of the colony's decay is the defective constitution of its government, which may readily be remedied. To bring about this desirable end, the government should not tolerate any vices; it should be equitable and upright in the administration of justice; should have a constant eye to any attack upon it, either within or without; should not load the inhabitants with taxes; the fundamental laws of its constitution should never be altered in prejudice of the nation; it should never lose sight of the interest of the persons governed; all dissensions either civil or military should be rigorously forbidden; good order in society should be the basis of the people's happiness; despotism should be held in abhorrence; disorder and licentiousness among the slaves should be severely punished; the choice of those magistrates who superintend the conduct of the inhabitants should be in the hands of clear headed political persons; and the Gover-

nor should act as a discreet and tender father, a faithful administrator of the laws, and should watch over the happiness and prosperity of all those over whom he presides.

A relaxation in military discipline is a third cause of the colony's decay; the remedies for this are too evident to need any thing to be said upon the subject.

The great luxury introduced into the colony is a fourth cause. I do not mean wholly to condemn luxury and every unnecessary expence; on the contrary, I am of opinion, that no country can become polished without it, and that luxuries contribute to the prosperity of commerce. Agriculture, manufactures, arts, trades, merchandize, all would languish without luxury; but it ought to be limited, it ought to be always proportioned to the greatness of the state and the industry of its subjects. There is no state that ought not to stop its progress by sumptuary laws; there are a thousand means of doing it, and it ought to be one part of the attention of the legislature to guide the people in this

this matter and prevent any excess. This attention would be worthy the government of Surinam, where luxury is at present rather an abuse of riches than a proof of opulence. For some years past magnificence and splendor has made in this colony so great a progress, that nothing can equal its decorations.

The construction of houses, some indeed more elevated, with finer architecture and more superb furniture than others, but all in general very magnificent; the dress of both sexes; with rich garments, such as embroidery, all kinds of velvets and clothes richly laced; very expensive laces for the ladies, and the finest linen both for the table and bed; toys for the women of great value; silver utensils and vessels of the newest fashion; superb equipages on springs drawn by horses of the highest price; tables served out with delicacies of all kinds, and the most expensive dishes; the most costly wines, &c. public exhibitions and shows to amuse the eye; feasts upon feasts; gaming; a great number of domestic servants of both sexes; in short,

every excess that can be supposed or thought of: all this must certainly contribute to the ruin of a commercial people.

The universal loss of credit, which has suddenly fallen upon Surinam in the midst of this abundance, has almost universally overthrown its commerce. The great want which they find who feel the effects of so sudden a revolution, obliges them, for want of other assistance, to have recourse to borrow at very usurious interest, in order to make good their payments. Hence their debts increase; and to aggravate the misfortune, all public confidence is vanished like smoke dissipated in the air. This is a fifth cause of its decay.

The disadvantageous situation in which Surinam is, as well for the colonists as those who have furnished them with money, does not present a very flattering prospect, neither for its commerce nor the means of assisting it. All the grandeur which a deceitful opulence exhibits, insensibly disappears; the best hopes are destroyed by the low price of their commodities, and by the universal want of credit

credit and public confidence. At so low an ebb is the credit of Surinam in Holland, that mortgages of this colony are sold at a loss of 30, 40, 50, and even 60 *per cent.* there having been merchants who have advanced them money very rashly, charmed as it were with the advantages they hoped to derive from so doing. The rage of placing their capitals in the colony of Surinam took place when it was in a very flourishing situation, and gave rise to a number of very unfair practices in the establishment of this great credit, which may be considered as a principal cause of its failure. The inhabitants of Surinam have even lost confidence in one another. Plantations are daily at market in consequence of executions, and sold for half their value: Those who have property or are in established credit, enrich themselves at the expence of the unfortunate by buying and selling their possessions.

There are members in the government there, who, instead of trying or wishing to put a stop to such sales by giving the proprietors time to look round them for assistance,

assistance, are the first to accelerate an execution, because they mean either to be purchasers, or to lend money on bills of exchange for a long term, at 12, 15, or 20 *per cent.* interest. It cannot therefore be wondered at, that monopoly and usury should take place in a colony where the governors are the persons most interested in such practices.

He who is not acquainted with the constitution of the government of Surinam, and the intrigues of persons in credit there, can never have an adequate idea of the actual state of the colony. Government paper there is scarcely current, and good faith and confidence are so shaken, that it will be very difficult to restore them to their pristine state. It requires a very powerful assistance to renew its credit, which is the basis of its prosperity. And nothing can accelerate it or render it more lasting than a reform in its government, accompanied with a wise and prudent economy in the inhabitants.

C H A P. XII.

Of the Dutch Colonies, and that of Surinam in particular.

ALTHOUGH the Dutch have no great settlements in the West Indies since they have been obliged to abandon almost all their conquests in Brazil, they carry on however a very considerable commerce.

The island of St. Eustachius and Curacoa * are neither large nor fertile in productions. The first is merely a mountain, about 20 miles in circumference. The habitations are built on the declivity of the mountain; and although they have neither springs nor rivers, they contrive to have fresh water for all they want by means of cisterns and reservoirs which they have constructed where they grow their sugar and tobacco.

* These are lately taken from them by the English, as are the Settlements of Demerary and Issequibo in South America.

Curacoa is about 30 leagues long and 10 broad, and produces also sugar and tobacco; but what renders these two islands most desirable is, their commerce carried on with the Spaniards on the continent, who furnish the Dutch with ingots of gold, silver in species, cochineal, farfeparilla, excellent tobacco, as well in rolls as in cigars, which is a branch of commerce very advantageous and most lucrative to the Republic. Seventy vessels come from thence annually to these two colonies.

The colony of Berbice, situated about 20 leagues distant from that of Surinam, is become sufficiently considerable by its fertility in the productions of coffee, cocoa, and cotton; but it is still susceptible of greater advancement. One circumstance which distinguishes it from all other colonies is, that the cotton-trees are there in great abundance, and that it furnishes besides an excellent dye, drawn from a plant called Orlean. They cultivate and prepare it something like indigo.

The navigation to this colony consists of 10 or 12 ships yearly; whence it is easy

easy to judge of the quantity of its productions.

The new colonies of Demerary and Iſſequibo, 30 or 40 leagues diſtant from Berbice, are remarkable for the quantity of their productions in coffee, cocoa, and cotton, with which they ſupply Zeland and Holland.

They are ſituate under a much more healthy and temperate climate than thoſe of Surinam and Berbice, though on the ſame continent; and may extend their plantations almoſt without limits. If they were as populous as Surinam, they would one day equal it in productions by the fertility of its ſoil. Sir George Rodney, however, in his laſt diſpatches, having taken poſſeſſion of theſe two colonies, reports, that their annual produce is at preſent as follows: 10,000 hogſheads of ſugar, beſides rum in proportion; 5,000,000 *lb.* of coffee, and 800,000 *lb.* of cotton; beſides cocoa, treacle, and indigo. He ſays alſo, that they alone are capable of employing more ſhips, and will produce a greater

greater revenue to the Crown than all the West India Islands together. But

The colony of Surinam is, without contradiction, the richest and of the greatest value to Holland. The immense quantity of its natural productions, and the extent of its connections with the Republic, present a very interesting picture in the actual state she is in. It is distinguished from all the colonies of America by the abundance and qualities of its productions; for the coffee, cocoa, cotton, and sugar which grow there, exceed in goodness the like commodities of other places. The following table of its produce from the 1st of January, 1750, to the last of December, 1774, will shew the progression of their increase.

The

The State of Exports from the Colony of Surinam in Sugar, Coffee, Cocoa, and Cotton, for the space of 25 Years, from 1750 to 1774, inclusively:

Years.	Hog(heads of Sugar.	Pounds of Coffee.	Pounds of Cocoa.	Pounds of Cotton.
1750	25,330	3,476,938	214,189	
1751	24,676	2,522,881	248,026	
1752	23,017	5,428,081	244,734	
1753	20,613	4,142,522	215,765	7,765
1754	16,196	5,766,389	142,284	5,594
1755	15,105	2,744,119	79,076	1,319
1756	17,989	5,323,940	129,712	1,429
1757	17,762	8,526,300	128,482	2,002
1758	12,835	6,930,702	99,061	785
1759	16,831	10,058,036	101,824	1,128
1760	18,511	9,366,411	120,169	1,561
1761	20,120	15,679,956	149,102	1,134
1762	15,806	9,225,412	73,494	3,460
1763	21,943	9,254,345	158,278	8,828
1764	20,425	7,813,990	121,060	34,231
1765	19,922	12,955,941	140,778	50,550
1766	18,741	13,165,006	220,501	132,109
1767	20,719	13,763,467	265,152	207,215
1768	20,783	10,207,596	397,539	246,202
1769	19,923	13,676,847	233,562	212,997
1770	14,431	7,837,974	169,487	148,188
1771	19,494	11,135,132	416,821	203,945
1772	19,260	12,267,134	354,935	90,035
1773	15,741	15,427,298	332,229	135,047
1774	15,111	11,016,518	506,610	105,126
	471,110	227,712,935	5,262,870	1,600,650

To this List we may add the Number of Vessels that transported these articles to Europe during the same space of time.

A List of Vessels that left the Port of Surinam for Amsterdam.

From 1750 to 1751 — 37 Vessels.

1751 — 1752 — 41

1752 — 1753 — 44

1753 — 1754 — 47

1754 — 1755 — 46

1755 — 1756 — 31

1756 — 1757 — 42

1757 — 1758 — 50

1758 — 1759 — 38

1759 — 1760 — 45

1760 — 1761 — 44

1761 — 1762 — 45

1762 — 1763 — 46

1763 — 1764 — 68

1764 — 1765 — 44

1765 — 1766 — 62

1766 — 1767 — 66

1767 — 1768 — 65

1768 — 1769 — 50

1769 — 1770 — 63

1770 — 1771 — 47

1771 — 1772 — 62

1772 — 1773 — 50

1773 — 1774 — 55

1774 — 1775 — 42

25 Years.

1230 Vessels.

The

The produce in money of the before-mentioned articles, according to an authentic list of the prices of one year, upon an average.

	£.	s.	d.
471,310 Hogsheads of Sugar, at } 5 <i>l.</i> sterling <i>per</i> Hoghead, }	2,356,550		
227,712,935 lbs. of Coffee, at 8 <i>d.</i> $\frac{1}{2}$ } English <i>per</i> Pound, - }	8,064,833	2	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
5,262,870 lbs. of Cocoa, at } 6 <i>d.</i> $\frac{1}{2}$ English <i>per</i> Pound, }	142,536	1	3
1,600,650 lbs. of Cotton, at } 8 <i>d.</i> English <i>per</i> Pound, }	53,355		
	<u>£. 10,617,274</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6 $\frac{1}{2}$</u>

The division of the above sum gives an annual revenue of better than 424,692 *l.* sterling for the 25 years, without reckoning the melasses or treacle which runs from the sugar, or the rum which they distill from the froth or scum, which in themselves form two very considerable objects, as we may see by the following account. It is also to be observed, that the immense exportation of commodities from the co-

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lony

lony of Surinam, during the 25 years before-mentioned, relates only to the city of Amsterdam, and that Rotterdam is not included in it, to which a great part of their exports are sent. This will appear by the two following accounts.

An account of the products exported from Surinam in 1771 and 1775, as well for Amsterdam as Rotterdam, and their amount in value.

	£.	s.	d.
1771. 21,000,000 lbs. of Coffee, } at 7 d. per Pound sterling, }	12,250,000		
24,000 Hogsheads of Sugar, at 5 l. 8 s. 4 d. per Hoghead, - - - }	168,000		
2,000,000 lbs. of Cocoa, } at 9 d. sterl. per Pound, }	1,500,000		
1,000,000 lbs. of Cotton, } at 8 d. sterl. per Pound, }	666,666	13	4

To which may be added the
produce of 700 Hogsheads of
Melasses, which amounts to - 22,458 6 8

Also for Rum, - - - 22,458 6 8

£. 14,629,583 6 8

OF SURINAM.

139

		£.	s.	d.
1775.	20,144,244 lb. of Coffee, } at 5 d. $\frac{1}{2}$ per Pound sterl. }	461,638	18	6
	20,255 Hogſheads of Sugar, } at 8 l. 6 s. 8 d. per Hogſh. }	168,791	13	8
	733,338 lbs. of Cocoa, at } 8 d. per Pound, - }	24,444	12	
	144,428 lbs. of Cotton, at } 8 d. per Pound, - }	12,035	13	4
		£. 666,910 17 6		

Befides the articles here ſpecified, there is annually a great quantity of timber exported and wood for inlaid work, which are not reckoned; nor are the finuggled articles, with which the Engliſh veſſels go away almoſt loaded. Suppoſing now pretty near the ſame proportion of goods to be imported at Amſterdam and Rotterdam, for 25 years, as was imported in 1771 and 1775, the whole amount of ſugar, coffee, cocoa, and cotton, will amount to 159,854,422 l. which is about 6,148,247 l. ſterling *per annum*.

If we deduct now from this ſum the profit of the veſſels that were employed in the navigation of Surinam, *viz.* 166,666

K 2

annually,

annually, and the commissioners expences of unloading, felling, insuring, warehouses, and other incidentals, at the rate of ten *per cent.* we shall see that the Republic gains annually 781,490*l.* sterling, and the colony, 5,366,757*l.* And if we add to this the advantage the Republic derives by the money the proprietors spend who live in Holland, having first made their fortunes in the colony; the interest the colonists pay for the money they have borrowed, &c. we may safely say, without being deceived, that the national wealth derived from this single colony, is equal to 850,000 *l.* sterling a year.

It will be even possible to augment the productions of the colony, by encreasing the plantations, either by establishing new possessions, or by renewing the culture of those which the continual wars with the negroes have obliged the possessors to abandon. It would be easy to form 150 new plantations, if the society of Surinam would permit the ground to be grubbed that remains uncultivated; for though they are under water, owing to the marshes,
6 they

they may be drained as readily as others were.

Permission has been requested from the society, to break up part of the forests (for new plantations) that surround the town of Paramaribo and its environs, and which render it unhealthy on account of the noxious vapours they continually exhale, but the society never would consent, and for no reason known; probably from want of good information concerning the local situation of the country, and the great advantages that must result from such a measure; the first of which would be the health of the inhabitants, brought about by the salubrity of the air, which would thus become pure by grubbing up and draining the marshes.

In the second place, the country being more open, the enemy who now shelter themselves in the woods, almost inaccessible to the white people, would be more easily destroyed, and reduced to seek a retreat further off.

The third advantage would proceed from the encrease of industry among the

inhabitants, commerce would flourish more and more, population would multiply the strength of the colonists, and by these united means, Surinam would find itself in a better situation to defend itself against the attacks of its enemies; who besides would be less at hand to repeat them so frequently, and would not so easily escape the pursuit of the regular troops, as they do at present.

Another advantage these new habitations would procure, would be a greater consumption of merchandize from Holland, the state to which they belong; which would shed its influence over all branches of commerce, and augment the national riches.

But the subject that requires the greatest encouragement, is the cultivation of cotton, it being less expensive than that of other productions, and is an article to which more profit hangs, and which will grow in a less fertile soil; besides, cotton by its great value, will compensate for the low price of other articles, and preserve a balance of commerce in favour of the
5 planters.

planters. The high price of this commodity, and the eagerness of foreigners to procure it, shew that it is the interest of the colonists to increase their plantations of it.

The more the cultivation of land is improved, the more we increase the riches of the nation, and that of the state. The colony of Surinam not only presents all those advantages to government, but sufficiently shews its actual riches, by the abundance and increase of those natural productions it annually throws into the scale of Dutch commerce.

C H A P. XIV.

Considerations on the present State of the Colony of Surinam.

NOtwithstanding the immense advantages which have been, particularized in the preceding chapter, it would be happy was the colony at this day in as flourishing a state, as it was in some few years since.

The different revolutions it has undergone in consequence of its continual internal war; the too great diminution in the price of its productions in Europe; the universal discredit come suddenly upon it by rash negotiations; the great expence it has been at; in short, the defects and abuses which manifest themselves in all parts of its publick administration, are, as I have before said, the causes of its decay.

In the present critical situation of things, there are no means more efficacious to preserve it from total ruin, than to take it out of the hands of the society, and place it under the immediate protection of the state.

Many able politicians agree, that exclusive privileges granted to companies or societies, are so many usurpations on the liberty and property of the citizens in general; and that far from procuring a real advantage to the state, are even destructive to the encrease of commerce, to the wise ends of policy; to the orders of
society,

society, to justice, to common and to natural right.

In a word, what pretence is there to prevent the generality of people from turning their industry and property to advantage, in order to favour a small number of men who have no other particular merit to boast, than that of devoting themselves to ambition and interest?

I would not be understood entirely to condemn exclusive privileges, whilst they tend to the prosperity of a state, and serve to encourage industry; provided these same privileges, by their abuses, do not injure the state, as it has done the colony of Surinam.

When the Republic of Holland has taken the colony into its own hands, the next step is to keep up constantly a body of regular troops, well officered, sufficient to form a line from place to place, on the principal rivers, to guard against the incursions of the negroes, so that at the first signal they may unite in order to attack and destroy them.

This

This operation, easy to execute, requires particular military care. Indeed the state should be a military one, and be established and supported on a solid footing.

To this assistance we may add another, namely, to augment the number of white domestic servants, to aid, in case of want, the detachments sent out in pursuit of the enemy. By this means, the colony would always find itself in a situation to defend its possessions, without remaining a long time exposed to those imminent dangers that threaten sooner or later its total destruction.

Experience has shewn, that want of a proper defence has brought the colony oftentimes to the brink of ruin. Without the assistance of the troops from Holland in the last revolt, it would have absolutely fallen into the hands of the rebellious negroes. A little before the arrival of these troops, the Governor was reduced to the disagreeable necessity of raising a body of 350 slaves, made free at the expence of the inhabitants; for, to prevail with them
to

to attack their fellow negroes, they were obliged to discharge them from the yoke of servitude, and promise them rewards in proportion to their deserts.

From these considerations, it must certainly appear to be the interest of government to contrive means to secure this colony from greater misfortunes. The faithful representation here given of its present situation, should be sufficient one would think, to shew that means cannot be applied too early, nor with too much earnestness, to regulate that which interests the fate of a nation essentially. But with all the precautions that can be taken for the safety of the colony, it is indispensibly necessary to put a stop to the abuses which have crept into the administration of its finances, its government, and its justice.

For this purpose, the government of Surinam should be composed of persons conversant in policy, and the art of war; invested with sufficient authority to do good, and yet properly tied up so as not to be able to commit evil.

Every

Every one knows, that a man who is placed at the head of a government, and who is unacquainted with finances and commerce, cannot do his duty properly.

Not only abilities in politicks, but abilities in military matters, are necessary in the government of such a state as that of Surinam.

The abuses that have been introduced for a number of years, have been either through ignorance, or through views of particular interests, arising from causes which I am not very willing to dive into. But as we cannot judge of causes, but from their effects, and of these effects but by their causes ; the present and future preservation and prosperity of this colony depend as well on the wisdom of government in the state, as on its own will, its own power, and its own strength, on one hand to discern these destructive causes, and on the other, to extirpate them entirely, and substitute principles that produce opposite effects.

One may easily judge of those which such a government would produce in the present

present state of things, and even in the most critical revolutions. The state would be served with zeal, integrity, and fidelity; commerce, freed from its shackles, would gain new vigour; industry would flourish, finances would be better conducted, and the colonists would not groan under the weight of so many taxes and imposts, which they cannot pay, on account of their productions selling at so low a price in Europe; credit and public confidence would be re-established, monopoly and usury would be excluded, especially in matters of finance, paper money, and bills of exchange; the police would be better attended to, justice would be administered with more integrity, and less partiality; the garrison and fortifications would be in a better state of defence; in a word, the colony, by means of such an administration, would become happy at home, and formidable abroad.

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